MERCILESS

An Original Screenplay

by

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WGAE REGISTERED

OVER BLACK:

A MAN’S VOICE. Tense. Haunted.

JOHN (V.O.)
What the hell are you?

FADE IN:

INT. WATTS RESIDENCE, BEDROOM - NIGHT

JOHN, 30s, stands at bedside. Opened and untucked Millhaven police uniform shirt. No shoes.

Though his revolver quivers slightly in his trembling hands, he maintains a bead on his target:

Sitting innocently in bed no more than three feet away is JULIA. An absolutely adorable eight year old with a shock of brown hair and big, bright eyes.

Julia stares down the barrel of cold steel, unnaturally calm. Her attention shifts from the gun’s barrel to John’s tense, sweating face.

His quiet determination is betrayed by the fear and confusion in his eyes.

Julia half-smiles. Slightly amused by John’s reaction.

John’s eyes leaves Julia and finds ANNA, mid-20s, watching from the doorway. Confused. Doesn’t know what she walked in on.

EXT. SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

Middle-class area. White picket fences. Immaculate yards. A serene slice of suburban pie.

Among the family vehicles parked within the various driveways, only one seems to stand out: a police cruiser with Millhaven sheriff decals.

Two distinct VOICES fill the night air from within this particular house. Upends the serenity.

Though the specifics of the conversation aren’t heard, the tone and pitch of the voices suggest there’s a verbal war taking place.

The screen door flies opens and PATRICK, 30s, storms out. Similar Millhaven police uniform as John, except for the Sheriff's star pinned on his chest.

He sets his sights on the parked police cruiser and never looks back.

CLAIRE, mid-20s, catches the door before it closes. Follows him out in robe and slippers. Stops at the porch's edge.

CLAIRE
What was I supposed to do?! Patrick!

Dust plumes from the tires of the cruiser as it reverses from the driveway.

Claire watches the vehicle peel off down the street. Wanting to follow. Knowing she can't.

She closes her robe and retreats back into the house to tend to the CRYING BABY.

EXT./INT. RURAL ROAD/POLICE CRUISER - NIGHT

Open fields sandwich this isolated strip of road. No houses for miles. The epitome of "boondocks" country.

Headlights from an approaching vehicle burns through the darkness framing a speed sign on the road's shoulder: "Speed Limit: 35."

The lights intensifies on the sign as the vehicle draws closer.

Patrick's police cruiser screams past. Has to be going twenty miles over.

INSIDE POLICE CRUISER -

Patrick grips the wheel tightly. Fuming. Still affected by that argument.

A CRACKLE from the mounted radio, then a VOICE:

DISPATCHER
Chief? You there?

Patrick stares at the radio for a moment. Doesn't want to answer it. Doesn't have a choice.

He snatches the receiver from its mount. Speaks into it.

PATRICK
Yeah.

DISPATCHER
We just received a call for a ten fifty-seven...
(grim)
...It's at John's residence, chief. Units are on route.

Patrick's demeanor changes hearing the location. Genuine concern.

He drops the receiver. Buries his foot on the gas.

EXT. WATTS RESIDENCE - LATER

Nestled within acres of uninterrupted fields is a two story country house neighbored by a small, workman's shed.

A wooden fence stops halfway around the property. A small pile of lumber punctuates where the progress was stopped.

Patrick's police cruiser parks in the driveway. The first on scene. He exits and makes his way to the house.

Pauses. Instinctively unholsters his revolver reacting to the GUNSHOT from inside.

Races to the sound.

INT. WATTS RESIDENCE, BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Horror flushes Patrick's face seeing the TWO DEAD BODIES on the floor --

-- JOHN'S DEAD BODY is positioned bedside. Two close-ranged shots to the chest.

ANNA'S DEAD BODY is slumped a couple feet away. BLOOD spills from the GUNSHOT WOUND at the side of her head. Pools.

The revolver lying just inches from her limp hand suggests it was self-inflicted.

The SCREAMING heard is from Julia reaching out for Anna.

INT. JENNIFER'S ROOM - MORNING

SUPERIMPOSE: TWENTY YEARS LATER

STREAMS OF SUNLIGHT penetrates through the bent slats of a Venetian blind. Gives this interior an identity.

It looks like the aftermath of a very powerful storm, or a break in, maybe neither:

Drawers dangle from a busted mirrored dresser. Clothing removed from hangers and clot the floor. An overturned lamp.

Sitting on the disheveled bed, looking as if she was on the losing end of a MMA fight, is JENNIFER ROMAN, late-twenties.

Her eyes (one's swollen, half-closed; the other normal) stares straight ahead -- doesn't seem to blink once -- as she brings a lit cigarette to her bloodied lips and takes a meaningful drag.

Her eyes suddenly moves, looking down at the blood staining her tank top, the bruising along her legs. Doesn't seem bothered.

Her eyes leave her body and fall onto the VIBRATING CELL PHONE resting on the adjoining night table.

The name, "BROOKE" appears on the display screen.

Jennifer turns away, not interested in answering it. Takes drag from the cigarette, while studying the fucked up bedroom.

Looks determined to do something about it.

MONTAGE:

-- Jennifer gathers the clothing from the floor and places them back into the hanging drawers.

-- Jennifer fixes the slats of the blinds. Pulls them open to allow the sunlight to pour in.

-- A bucket rests on the floor. A gloved hand reaches into the soapy water and pulls from it a scrub brush.

Jennifer's on her hands and knees doggedly scrubbing the blood stains out of the carpet.

INT. JENNIFER’S BATHROOM - LATER

Jennifer faces her reflection in the mirror. It’s hard to believe, but somewhere beneath the bruising and blood is a very beautiful woman.

She stares at herself as if finally understanding the severity of what happened to her. She carefully touches her busted lip. Her darken, swollen eye.

Tears fall involuntarily along her cheeks, mixing with the blood.

INT. SHOWER - MOMENTS LATER

Jennifer sits on the shower floor. Her knees held to her chest. Her arms holding them together tightly. Her head buried in the space created between her knees and chest.

She allows the steaming, pressurized water to pelt her naked body unrelentingly.

Her shoulders heaves slightly as she cries.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Spacious and well-furnished room. Modern decor. Lots of light colors.

A program plays on a 42” FLAT SCREEN TELEVISION. The CHARACTER’S mouths move, but there’s no sound.

Lounging in the window sill in an oversized, cartoon-printed tee and ankle socks, is Jennifer.

Her hair in a ponytail. The damage to her face is healing, but still visible, and disturbing.

Oscillating red and blue washes over her from outside. Jennifer takes a drag from a cigarette as she concentrates on the commotion:

There are more prosperous neighborhoods in this city, but this isn’t one of them. For every occupied row home is an abandoned one. Boarded and forgotten.

The HOMELESS occupy a vacant lot across the street. They huddle around a trash can bonfire to keep warm.

Quietly talking and pointing toward the scene nearby --

-- three Baltimore City patrol cruisers are converged around the neighborhood corner Liquor Store.

Two GANGBANGERS sit on the curve with their hands behind their back.

Jennifer continues staring, transfixed. Takes a drag. Can't seem to pull herself away.

EXT. JENNIFER'S ROW HOME - DAY

BROOKE stands on the abbreviated porch. Fitted, designer clothing that accentuates her curves.

She gives the door a KNOCK. Waits for an answer. Doesn't get one, so she knocks again. Waits. Nothing.

Brooke steps down from the porch. Looks up at one of the upper floor windows. Notices the curtain swaying.

Yells to the window.

BROOKE

Jen?

INT. JENNIFER'S BEDROOM - SAME

Jennifer has her back pressed against the wall adjoining the window. Her bruising, though healing nicely, is still visible.

After a moment, Jennifer peeks back outside to see Brooke entering the silver BMW parked curbside, and driving off.

INT. JENNIFER'S BEDROOM - MORNING

The room is in better shape. Everything is neat and organized.

Jennifer, professionally dressed in a pantsuit, sits before a vanity mirror. Her face is considerably healed, though bruising is still slightly visible.

She dabs makeup on the areas of her face where the bruising is most visible. Ponytails her hair.

Jennifer regards herself in the mirror one last time to make certain everything's perfect, then leaves.

EXT. JENNIFER'S ROW HOME - MOMENTS LATER

Jennifer greets a BLACK COUPLE leaving out a couple doors down as she locks her front door.

They wave politely as they enter their car and drive off.

Jennifer deactivates the alarm to her Prius as she approaches.

EXT. PARKING AREA - LATER

Moderately full. In the distance, MORNING COMMUTERS -- mostly business professionals -- are cluttered on a Light Rail platform awaiting the train.

Jennifer exits her Prius and makes a run for the Light Rail pulling into the station.

INT. LIGHT RAIL - LATER

The train car is packed. Commuters stand in the aisles, crowding the steps near the doors.

Jennifer sits at the window lost in the passing scenery. Earbuds in her ears. Absorbed in the music.

Drowning out the surrounding noise.

INT. OFFICE - LATER

A labyrinth of cubicles make up the main office space.

Ringing phones. OFFICE WORKERS coming and going hurriedly as if needing to be somewhere, but not walking fast enough to get there.

JENNIFER'S CUBICLE

Moderately spaced. Just large enough for the cabinet and wraparound desk, but not much else.

A couple of framed pictures are visible along the desk:

Jennifer and a handsome MAN (MASON), around her age, at a beach smiling into the camera; another of herself, years younger, in Towson University Women's Lacrosse gear hoisting a trophy in triumph. Sharing the moment with her is an OLDER MAN (HENRY) presumably her father.

A sound intensifies nearby. The rapid clicking of computer keys.

Jennifer's at the desk expertly typing something on her computer. She senses someone.

Looks up long enough to acknowledge Brooke watching her from the entrance, then she's back to her work.

BROOKE
We're friends, aren't we?

There's a quiet determination in Jennifer's eyes. Completely focused. Doesn't have time to talk. Doesn't have time to stop.

JENNIFER
I'm really backed up here, Brooke. Could we do this later?

Brooke pretends not to be hurt by the shrug-off, but it shows.

BROOKE
Mr. Maynard wants to see you in his office.

This stops Jennifer. Looks worried.

JENNIFER
Did he say what it was about?

Brooke shrugs.

BROOKE
Maybe you should go find out.

Jennifer gives Brooke a look. Hearing the sarcasm in her tone. Not sure why it's directed at her.

INT. MR. MAYNARD'S OFFICE - LATER

Spacious. An intoxicating view from the surrounding windows. Oil paintings. A wall aquarium. Import rugs... all the things associated with materialistic wealth.

Sitting behind a mahogany desk in a tailor-made suit is MR. MAYNARD, 60s. Sliver hair. In his own world.

He thumbs through a boating catalog. Flipping through picture after of picture of expensive yachts.

He looks up momentarily hearing the KNOCK at the door, and seeing Jennifer poking in her head.

He waves her in as buries his eyes in the catalog, flips a page.

Jennifer cautiously enters, not sure what to expect. Closes the door quietly in her wake.

Mr. Maynard doesn’t bother looking up as he gestures for her to approach his desk, raising his hand, stopping her before she gets to close.

Mr. Maynard doesn’t acknowledge her as he speaks.

MR. MAYNARD
I understand you were feeling under the weather for the past five days. Must’ve been some illness.

JENNIFER
(meekly)
I think it was the flu.

Mr. Maynard silently flips a page.

MR. MAYNARD
Did you receive any medical attention?

JENNIFER
(softly)
No.

MR. MAYNARD
I guess you nursed yourself back to health.

JENNIFER
(same tone)
Yes.

MR. MAYNARD
You received a handbook at orientation. Within it, are rules I expect my employees to be aware of and follow. How well are you familiar with those rules, Ms. Roman?

JENNIFER
Intimately, sir.

Mr. Maynard raises an eyebrow as if to say, “Really?”

MR. MAYNARD
How about the one on page thirteen?

Silence. Mr. Maynard flips a page, then pauses, looking up at Jennifer expectantly.

Jennifer gives him a look, not sure what he wants, then understands.

JENNIFER
“Any absences beyond two days require written notification from a practicing physician. If the employee does not produce written notification, they are subject to immediate termination.”

Mr. Maynard goes back to the catalog. Stone-faced. Flips a page. Jennifer waits nervously for Mr. Maynard to give her some direction.

Beat. Mr. Maynard flips another page. After a moment, he looks up at Jennifer as if wondering why she’s still standing there.

He returns to his catalog as he says:

MR. MAYNARD
Have a nice life, Ms. Roman.

Jennifer heart sinks. She stares at him with emotional eyes, wanting to say something. Wanting to plead her case.

Mr. Maynard looks up again, a bit annoyed by her presence.

Jennifer backs away from his desk, turns and leaves.

Mr. Maynard shakes his head at the pathetic sight leaving his office. When she’s gone, he returns to his catalog, flips a page.

JENNIFER’S CUBICLE

Brooke watches Jennifer clean out her cubicle; stuffing personal items into a small cardboard box. There’s a sense of sorrow in Brooke’s eyes.

Jennifer pauses sensing her. Doesn’t look at her.

BROOKE
I tried to stop this from happening. I asked Mr. Maynard to reconsider.
(MORE)

BROOKE (CONT'D)
(beat)
You never answered any of my calls. Why have you been avoiding me?

It’s a conversation Jennifer doesn’t want to get into.

JENNIFER
I’ll see you around.

Jennifer gathers the box as she walks out.

INT. JENNIFER’S HOUSE, KITCHEN - NIGHT

Jennifer enters juggling a couple of grocery bags. Makes it to the counter before she loses her grip.

She removes the groceries from the bag and places them in the appropriate areas, unaware of the HUMANOID FIGURE watching from the darkness of the adjoining room.

MASON (O.S.)
We’re going out.

Jennifer jumps with a start. A soda bottle slips from her grasp and SHATTERS onto the floor.

She turns as MASON steps into the light. Expensive suit. Clean-shaven. Good-looking.

Jennifer just stands there for a moment. Doesn’t bother cleaning the mess. Too scared to move. Too scare to even blink.

JENNIFER
(intimidated)
Where are we going?

MASON
(re: the broken glass)
You gonna clean that up?

Mason watches Jennifer grab the broom and dustpan as if she was the most pathetic being in the world.

As she cleans --

JENNIFER
Where are we going?

Mason looks at her as if the answer was obvious.

MASON
Out.

EXT./INT. INNER-CITY NEIGHBORHOOD/MASON’S CAR - NIGHT

The all-black GMC Yukon Denali seems out of place strolling through the urban decay. As such, it gets curious looks from passersby.

INSIDE DENALI -

Mason’s at the wheel. He looks around at the environment with contempt. As if the neighborhood, and possibly his company, is beneath him.

MASON
For the life of me I can’t figure you out. Your parents were ready to set you up with a terrific place in the county.
(mocking Jennifer)
“I want to do something for myself.”
(beat)
How’s that working out for you?

He glances over at Jennifer riding shotgun. She stares out the side window, as if searching for a way out. Wanting to be anywhere but there.

JENNIFER
I don’t mind it around here.

MASON
When you get raped, don’t come crying to me.

Mason lights a cigarette. Takes a drag.

MASON
By the way, you’re coming with me to Indianapolis.

JENNIFER
What’s in Indianapolis?

MASON
What does it matter? It’s a free trip. It’s not like you have anything better to do.

Jennifer looks at Mason suspiciously. Sensing he knows something.

MASON
You stayed out a week? A fucking week?
(beat)
(MORE)

MASON (CONT'D)
I guess I'll have to handle your rent until your irresponsible ass find something, huh?

Mason glances at her, waiting for an answer. When she doesn't answer, he flicks the cigarette at Jennifer's face to get her attention.

MASON
Hey! You in there?

Jennifer lets out a scream feeling the heat from the cigarette's embers.

Mason's amused by Jennifer's reaction, until she sweeps the lit cigarette onto the floor.

MASON
My fucking floor!

Mason instantaneously slams on the breaks, reaches for Jennifer, but she has already unlatched her seatbelt, and out the door.

Mason calls after her from the ajar door.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - SAME

Jennifer blindly runs into an intersection. Doesn't see the Impala coming from the opposite direction.

Until she hears --

-- the SCREECH FROM THE VEHICLE'S BRAKES.

Jennifer's body slams into the car's windshield, spider-webbing it, then slides along its hood onto the asphalt.

Jennifer lies motionless. VOICES seem to echo around her:

A WOMAN'S SCREAM. A MAN yelling for someone to call the cops.

The voices trails off as Jennifer's eyes drifts shut.

OVER BLACK

The SOUND of RUNNING WATER.

FADE IN:

A CHROME FAUCET.

Steaming water runs freely from its spout. Adds to the water that has already filled the porcelain tub.

A SHAPELY SILHOUETTE appears just beneath the water’s surface. Legs. Breast.

Doesn’t take long to discover that this curvaceous figure belongs to Jennifer.

Her head rested on a folded towel. Eyes closed. She surrenders to the relaxing atmosphere oblivious of the water ascending steadily.

It creeps along the white porcelain border until it is consumed --

-- the water rises methodically along Jennifer’s neck, to her chin until her entire face is completely submerged.

Jennifer’s eyes widen in realization.

She instinctively moves her head for the surface. Doesn’t penetrate. Like a wall. Unyielding.

Jennifer PANICS. Pound her fists against the solidified surface, silently SCREAMING. AIR BUBBLES escape her mouth.

Jennifer stops instantaneously. Her eyes fix on something beyond this newly formed wall.

A look of utter fear flushes Jennifer’s face.

INT. HOSPITAL, PATIENT’S ROOM - NIGHT

Jennifer’s closed lids open to reveal a pair of haunted eyes.

She lies in bed, distracted by the rhythmic beeping from the electrocardiogram.

Her eyes meet the intravenous tube running to an IV unit. The plaster cast enveloping her forearm and hand.

She lifts her head slightly, noticing the HUMANOID FIGURE watching from the dark recesses of a corner. Diminutive in stature. A child?

Jennifer leans forward to get a better look. Pauses hearing the voice of --

BROOKE (O.S.)
You're lucky...

Jennifer turns to Brooke sitting bedside. Restless. She's been there for a while. It looks as if she's been crying.

BROOKE
...That's what the doctor said.

Jennifer finally notices the large gathering of balloons and flowers cluttering the window.

JENNIFER
How long was I out?

BROOKE
Thirty-two hours, maybe. You were under close observation for the first twenty-four.

JENNIFER
How long have you been here?

BROOKE
The whole time.

Brooke takes a moment to compose herself. It takes everything in her power not to break down.

BROOKE
When did we start keeping secrets? It wasn't in high school or college. Friend's aren't supposed to keep secrets from each other, right?

Jennifer finally notices the bruising along her bare arms are visible.

BROOKE
That explains why you've been avoiding me.

JENNIFER
I didn't want anyone to know.

BROOKE
The doctors seen the bruises. They're going send someone in here to speak to you --

JENNIFER
-- I don't want to speak to anyone.

BROOKE
-- You need to tell somebody what this fucker's doing to you.

JENNIFER
It'll only make things worst.

BROOKE
You have to get away from him, Jen. He's not gonna stop until he kills you.

JENNIFER
You don't understand. I've tried everything.

BROOKE
I've noticed.

Brooke gestures to the multiple, healed lacerations visible along her forearm. Judging from the precision of the scars, each one appears self-inflicted.

BROOKE
There has to be another way.

JENNIFER
I haven't found it.

Brooke looks away as if wrestling with a thought. She makes a decision, turns to Jennifer crying uncontrollably.

Musters the strength to say:

BROOKE
I've been with Mason. We've been messing around, off and on, for about eight months now.

Jennifer's world looks like it's been shattered.

BROOKE
He said y'all was going through some things. He promised me he'd break off with you... I didn't know how bad it was.

Jennifer eases into bed and turns over, facing away from Brooke.

Brooke watches Jennifer for a long moment. Genuine remorse. As she grabs her leather jacket...

BROOKE
Mason’s a piece of shit. He doesn’t care about anyone or anything... but, I’m not telling you something you don’t already know.

...And then leaves.

Jennifer closes her eyes allowing all of her emotions to pour out.

After a moment, she opens them and wipes them clear. She sits up just enough to check the shadowy corner.

Relaxes seeing that it’s empty.

EXT. GAS STATION/CONVENIENCE STORE - NIGHT

A silver BMW pulls into the station, and parks alongside a gas pump.

Brooke steps out, checks the number on the pump, and walks towards the convenience store.

INT. CONVENIENCE STORE - MOMENTS LATER

An ELDERLY MAN sits behind the counter watching the --

SURVEILLANCE MONITOR. Multiple black and white screens capture different areas of the store -- inside and out.

From one of the screens, Brooke approaches the store.

A bell CHIMES.

The Elderly Man turns from the monitor and faces Brooke. Adjust his glasses to get a better look of the person standing in front of him.

He smiles liking what he sees.

BROOKE
Thirty on five.

ELDERLY MAN
Anything else?

Brooke notices the various brands of cigarettes on the shelf behind the counter. Points to a brand.

The Elderly Man reaches for a pack of Marlboro Reds.
Places it on the counter.

ELDERLY MAN
That'll be forty even.

Brooke hands him the money.

ELDERLY MAN
Have a nice evening.

The Elderly Man punctuates his statement with a wink.

Brooke snatches up the cigarettes, turns away
uncomfortable.

BROOKE
You too.

The Elderly Man's eyes are glued to Brooke's derriere as
she leave.

ELDERLY MAN
Lawd have mercy.

The Elderly Man shakes his head as he returns to his
seat.

EXT. GAS STATION/CONVENIENCE STORE - MOMENTS LATER

As Brooke hurries to the gas pump, the surrounding lamps
of the gas station and convenience store flicker, then
dies.

BROOKE
You've gotta be kidding me.

Brooke's body seizes hearing something in the distance.
Listens.

The sound intensifies, becoming more distinct. Metal
scraping against asphalt.

A PAIR OF BLACK-VEINED COVERED CHILD-LIKE FEET

moving methodically along the asphalt.

Illuminated momentarily by the SPARKS spewing from the
metal sledgehammer as it is being pulled along.

BROOKE

stuck in the darkness unaware of her surroundings. Fear breaks her down. She whispers to herself, pleading.

The sound is ear-splitting. It can't be no more than five feet away.

Brooke holds her hand over her mouth to keep from screaming. Silence. Then, the vibrance from a controlled beam of light washes over Brooke's panicked face.

Brooke SCREAMS.

ELDERLY MAN
Whoa. Easy. It's just me.

The Elderly Man shines the beam of light into his face for reassurance. Damn near blinding himself in the process. Fumbles the light.

Brooke slaps his chest with her hand.

BROOKE
Scared the shit outta me. Shit-head.

ELDERLY MAN
The lights went out. Thought you could use some assistance.

BROOKE
Thanks... I guess.

ELDERLY MAN
Gotta be careful out here. There are a lot of crazies.

BROOKE
No shit.

And he's off. Brooke, still on edge, walks over to her vehicle. Removes the fuel nozzle from the pump, places it in the gas tank.

She surveys the area, cautiously. Looking out for anyone or anything suspicious.

EXT./INT. ROAD/BROOKE'S BMW - LATER

A back road. The one used as a short cut. Street lamps are few and far between.

Right now, it’s empty. It’s as if no knows it exists. Until, the headlights of a vehicle speeds along. Brooke’s BMW.

BROOKE’S BMW -

Brooke yawns as she removes a CD from the overhead CD holder. Slides the disc into the player.

HARD ROCK MUSIC blasts from the stereo -- the only thing keeping her up.

She tries her best to concentrate on the road, but her drowsy eyes make it difficult.

BROOKE’S POV -

Everything’s blurred and distorted. The headlights make it worst.

A SHADOWY OBJECT in the shape PERSON standing in the middle of the road. Diminutive in stature. A child?

The Child seems to be holding something above its head, though it’s not clear what.

BACK TO SCENE -

Brooke’s eyes widen, reacting to the figure in the road. Instinctively slams on the brakes.

The BMW headlight beams afford a glimpse of metal as it buries into the hood of the car.

ROAD

The hood CRUMBLES under the immense force. Propelling several feet into the air.

The backend accordions as it crashes onto the asphalt.

SPARKS spew as the momentum carries the vehicle for a couple of feet, before resting on its roof.

BROOKE’S BMW

Brooke claws herself halfway through the broken window. Bloodied. Hurting.

Collapses from the effort.

Tries to muster the strength to move. Can’t. Her foot is twisted under an obstruction.

She smells the air. A familiar scent. It causes her to panic.

Brooke searches for its location. Finds the gasoline leaking from a ruptured fuel line.

Her eyes follow the trail of gasoline snaking along the asphalt. It slows to a stop before the pair of child-like, BLACK-VEINED COVERED FEET.

Brooke suddenly notices the person, partially hidden in darkness, and what it's holding -- a SLEDGEHAMMER posed in the night air.

BROOKE

No. Wait!

Ignoring Brooke's plead, the sledgehammer strikes down. Its metal head scrapes the asphalt creating a SPARK.

The gasoline IGNITES.

The fire consumes the trail of gasoline leading back to Brooke.

The INTENSE EXPLOSION drowns her screams.

EXT. MILLHAVEN - DAY

Dense, lush forest surrounds this rural town. A small town. The kind of place where everybody knows everybody.

A lighthouse and the coast can be seen in the distance revealing something about this town's location. New England, maybe?

A Volkswagen Beetle travels along the main street. Lots of family owned businesses.

INT. DOREEN'S TAVERN - DAY

Not to many hanging around. Just a couple of stragglers from the afternoon rush. Peter Gabriel's "Sledgehammer" pumps from a vintage jukebox.

As the song wanes, CLAIRE, the bartender, reaches to raise the volume on the elevated TV.

SOUNDS from a baseball game fills this modestly-spaced interior.

TV ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
Great day for a game here, folks. And here they are, your Millhaven Pirates!

At forty-five, Claire has managed to retain some of her vitality from her thirties. Her hair has yet to grey, and her body is still holding up.

She fixes a PATRON a drink, pauses noticing RACHEL entering. Twenties. Pretty in a “Plain Jane” sorta way.

Claire shoots Rachel a look -- a mixture of surprise and curiosity.

RACHEL
We need to talk.

CLAIRE
I’m working, and you should be in school.

Claire slides the Patron his drink. Rachel watches, offended by the shrug-off.

RACHEL
Now.

Rachel leaves. Claire’s taken aback by Rachel’s tone. She looks around, not liking the attention she’s getting from the customers.

She signals for the other Bartender to take over.

EXT. DOREEN’S TAVERN - MOMENTS LATER

Claire exits the bar. Finds Rachel quietly critiquing the early nineties Buick Regal parked within the tavern’s adjoining parking lot.

It really stands out against the newer vehicles parked around it.

Claire confronts Rachel. All business.

RACHEL
You are aware that Buick made newer models since ‘91 --

CLAIRE
-- If you ever come to my job and talk to me like that again --

RACHEL
-- I’m dropping out.

Beat. Claire regards Rachel. Can’t tell if she’s serious or not.

RACHEL
I’m not joking.

Claire finally notices the moving boxes clotted in the back of the Volkswagen Beetle parked curbside. Rachel isn’t joking.

RACHEL
I didn’t want to tell you, but I promised dad I would.

CLAIRE
Patrick knows about this?

Rachel realizes she’s revealed something. Quietly starts off for the Volkswagen.

It hits Claire all at once, still manages:

CLAIRE
That’s it? You’re leaving?

RACHEL
I say my job’s done here.

Claire catches up to stop her.

CLAIRE
You can’t just come to my job, drop this bullshit in my lap and then say, “Peace. I’m out.” It doesn’t work like that.
(beat)
What’s going on? This isn’t like you.

RACHEL
Like you would know.

CLAIRE
I was in labor with you for thirteen hours. You spent seventeen years of your life under my roof. I say that makes me an expert.

RACHEL
Okay, “Ms. Expert.” Did you know I had my belly button pierced when I was sixteen?
(she didn’t)
(MORE)

RACHEL (CONT'D)
Or, my first kiss when I was twelve?
(news to her)
Or, that I lost my virginity at seventeen? In my room. While you were downstairs watching Leno.

CLAIRE
You did what?!

Rachel smiles at her reaction. Point proven.

Claire relaxes, focuses on the matter at hand.

CLAIRE
We'll talk about that virginity thing later. Right now, you're going back to school. That's the end of it.

RACHEL
No I'm not.

Claire gives Rachel an authoritative gaze that's meant to intimidate.

Rachel stands her ground, defiantly. Whatever power Claire had over her isn't there anymore.

RACHEL
I never wanted to go to college. I sure as hell didn't want to take up Political Science. Political Science? I could give a fuck less about the state, government or politics.

CLAIRE
You never said anything.

RACHEL
Like it would've made a difference. If it wasn't "Claire Tate" approved, there was a problem. So, I shut up and did what I was told; never questioning anything. Just the way you like it. I'm not doing it anymore. I'm tired of living your life for you.

CLAIRE
Could you at least tell me where you're going?

RACHEL
So you could talk me out of it?

CLAIRE
So I don’t have to wonder where you are.
If you’re hurt, or need help.

Beat. Rachel lowers her defensive wall a bit.

RACHEL
New York, okay.

CLAIRE
New York? What’s in New York?

RACHEL
Modeling opportunities, among other things.

CLAIRE
You’re fucking with me, right?

And just like that, Rachel’s back on the defensive.

RACHEL
I hate when you prove me right.

Rachel continues for her car. Claire stops her before she gets in.

CLAIRE
I’m not gonna stand by and watch you give up your education for a fucking pipe dream. You’re smarter than this, Rachel. When did you become so delusional?

RACHEL
Delusional? I’m delusional? You think a college degree means anything anymore? Jenna’s brother was a business major. The valedictorian of his class. He isn’t working for some big corporation in the city. He’s bustin’ suds at Mama Jean’s making minimum wage.

CLAIRE
That doesn’t mean you’ll end up like him.

RACHEL
You’re right, I’m not. I’m not gonna be stuck in this godforsaken town pissin’ my life away serving shots to the local losers.

It hits like a blow to the gut. Claire’s SLAP comes from nowhere. Rachel palms her face. Shocked. Disgusted.

Claire immediately regrets it.

Rachel enters her Volkswagen. SLAMS the door for effect.

RACHEL
Lose the ring. It’s pathetic.

Claire self-consciously looks down at the wedding band around her ring finger.

She watches helplessly as her daughter’s Volkswagen shrink into the distance.

INT. MILLHAVEN POLICE DEPARTMENT - NIGHT

The minimal furnishings reveal a lot about the size of this particular police force: two sets of desks arranged, facing each other. Each has a computer.

An enclosed office is positioned near the back away from the bullpen.

PATRICK and Rachel are visible from the opened blinds -- Rachel’s talking as Patrick works on something on his computer, presumably listening.

OFFICER DANIELS, mid-20s, finds enjoyment watching them. Like a kid who’s stumbled on his father’s porn stash; curiosity impels him to look even though he knows he shouldn’t.

Officer Daniels buries his hand into a small popcorn bag, pulls from it a fistful of puffed kernels, and stuffs it into his mouth.

He’s startled by the Chinese food container placed in from of him. Looks up at --

-- OFFICER ASHLEY BRODIE, early 20s. Loose-fitting uniform. Barely there make-up. Trying desperately to downplay her attractiveness. To be one of the guys.

ASHLEY
Stop being nosey.

OFFICER DANIELS
Like there’s so much more we should be doing.

Officer Daniels places the popcorn bag on his desk. Opens the container and sifts through the food with a pair of chop sticks.

He pinches a piece of brown, gelatinous substance with his chop sticks. Strangely, it resemblances meat.

OFFICER DANIELS
What’s this?

Ashley reads from the receipt.

ASHLEY
Beef Fried Rice.

OFFICER DANIELS
The fact that you had to read that from a receipt says it all. What did you get?

ASHLEY
Shrimp Lo Mein.

OFFICER DANIELS
(incredulous)
You couldn’t get me the same?

ASHLEY
It was a dollar more.

OFFICER DANIELS
You couldn’t spot me?

ASHLEY
I’m still waiting on the twenty I spotted you.

OFFICER DANIELS
C’mon. I’ll trade ya.

ASHLEY
You know I don’t trust their beef.

Officer Daniels mumbles as he forces the “beef” into his mouth.

Ashley leans back in her chair with her food container. Kicks up her feet, getting comfortable. Prepares to eat.

She stops noticing Officer Daniels resuming his spying on Patrick and Rachel.

ASHLEY
Could you at least make it less obvious?

Officer Daniels ignores her.

PATRICK'S OFFICE

Patrick's been through a lot throughout his career and, now at 50, it finally shows.

He's working on something on his computer; half-listening to Rachel as he hunt-and-pecks.

RACHEL
...I tried to talk to her. Tried to be the adult. You know what I get for my trouble? A slap. Can you believe it? She slapped me...

Rachel's voice trails off realizing Patrick isn't pay attention.

RACHEL
... so, this morning I found out I was pregnant.

Patrick continues typing. Presumably unaware of Rachel's statement or her resulting irritation.

RACHEL
Really, dad?

Patrick finally looks up. Notices Rachel's annoyed look.

PATRICK
Heard every word.

RACHEL
What was the last thing I said?

PATRICK
Something about going back to school and finishing your education?

RACHEL
Not even close.

PATRICK
You do know Claire's reaction was justifiable. If you came to me with that nonsense, I'd tell you the same.

RACHEL
I did come to you, and you <u>supported</u> my decision.

PATRICK
That wasn't me. It was my evil twin.

RACHEL
(softly)
What a bait and switch.

PATRICK
I’m not taking sides, but you have to admit, this is a pretty irresponsible thing to do.

RACHEL
Sure sounds like you’re taking sides.

PATRICK
Claire and I made sacrifices so you could further your education. Don’t you think quitting is a shitty way to repay us?

RACHEL
With the money I can make, I can pay y’all back... plus interest.

PATRICK
You think it’s that easy? You just drive to New York and the modeling agency just hands you a contract?

RACHEL
You don’t think I’m pretty enough?

PATRICK
It’s not about your appearance. It’s about reality, and what you’re doing just isn’t realistic. The only thing that’s guaranteed is your education. Wouldn’t you want to be judged by your mental acuity instead of how you look on a billboard?

Rachel says nothing. But, she’s listening.

PATRICK
Finish what you came there to do. Everything else will fall into place. There. That’s my two cents no one asked for.

Patrick resumes typing. Rachel knows Patrick’s right, still isn’t willing to concede to defeat.

RACHEL
You have to admit, seeing yourself on a huge billboard would be kinda cool.

PATRICK
So would receiving a degree.

Rachel frowns -- touche.

RACHEL
You suck.

PATRICK
I love you, too. See you Spring Break.

Rachel kisses Patrick on the cheek, then leaves.

BULLPEN

Officer Daniels looks away quickly seeing Rachel leaving out.

OFFICER DANIELS
Quick. Act natural.

Ashley shakes her head as she leaves her desk and meets Rachel.

Rachel warms seeing Ashley. Greets her with a tender hug.

ASHLEY
Everything's alright?

RACHEL
Copacetic.

ASHLEY
We still on for Saturday?

RACHEL
Adele in concert is a pretty sure bet. Hate to keep this short, but I gotta get back. I'll call you, okay?

Ashley and Rachel shares a hug before Rachel leaves.

Ashley watches after her, until the door closes severing her view.

INT. PATRICK'S 4X4 - NIGHT

Patrick's behind the wheel staring off, blankly. The drumming rain seems to relax him.

A cluster of emergency lights are visible through the rain water cascading over his windshield.

A KNOCK from his side window jars him from his stupor.

Patrick pushes a button to lower the window, revealing Ashley guarded from the torrential downpour by an umbrella.

Her eyes are red as if recently crying.

ASHLEY
You need to look at this.

Patrick unlatches his seatbelt.

EXT. ABANDONED HOUSE - NIGHT

Millhaven police and Emergency vehicles block off the area around the property.

Patrick and Ashley share an umbrella. He stops abruptly facing the house. Ashley continues on not noticing.

The Watts residence two decades later, and it hasn't aged very well. Paint-chipped and weather stained. Lower windows boarded. One of the upper windows appears broken out.

As unwelcoming as it is foreboding.

Patrick stares wistfully. The ECHO of a GUNSHOT. Of Julia SCREAMING.

Ashley stops realizing Patrick isn't with her. Looks back at him staring off. Unprotected from the downpour.

ASHLEY
Chief?

The voice snaps Patrick back to reality. He turns to Ashley. Pauses, seeing something beyond Ashley.

His heart to drops.

PATRICK
Oh God, no.

Patrick races to --

RACHEL'S VOLKSWAGEN

-- where he opens the driver's door. Rachel's head dangles in from the busted passenger door window. A gaping hole at the back of her skull.

Glass shards clutter the seat below. Blood stains the upholstery.

INT. VOLKSWAGEN BEETLE - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

From the rolled-up passenger window, the out-of-focus ASSAILANT moves with purpose dragging something in the mud.

Rachel struggles to pull herself up. Eclipses the approaching Assailant.

Her face twisted in pain.

THEN -

Rachel's head violently BURSTS through the window. Dangles lifelessly.

There's a large hole at the back of her skull. Bone fragments jut through mangled, bloodied flesh and hair.

EXT. ABANDONED HOUSE - NIGHT (PRESENT)

In turning away, Patrick sees Ashley just standing there. Can barely keep it together.

ASHLEY
A couple found her car.

Ashley gestures to the HYSTERICAL COUPLE standing near their mini van. Officer Daniels is there taking their statement.

ASHLEY
They were coming home from the game. I'm thinking maybe her car stalled, and she went inside the Amityville looking for assistance.

PATRICK
What about her cell phone?

ASHLEY
Up on the dash, dead.

PATRICK
Go home, Ash. I can take it from here.

Ashley clears her eyes. Tries her best to soldier on. It's hard.

ASHLEY
I’m fine, chief.

PATRICK
That wasn’t a request.

Ashley takes the hint. Reluctantly leaves.

Patrick calmly closes the door. Walks around to Rachel’s rain drenched body partially hangs from the car’s window.

Patrick studies Rachel’s body with a practiced eye: her knees bent -- hovering a couple inches from the ground; mud staining her pants and shoes.

Patrick leans closer to examine Rachel’s hand dangling from the car’s door handle; mud caked beneath her fingernails.

He notices something on the ground. Squats to investigate the shoe impressions that lead to the unattractive yard.

Patrick studies the impressions curiously. Strange, only one set.

He makes his way through the yard. Kneels, studying the deep impressions in the mud made by a person’s fingers.

EXT. ABANDONED HOUSE - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Teeth gritted, Rachel focused on her Beetle parked in the distance.

She digs her fingers deep into the mud. Fights for every inch.

EXT. ABANDONED HOUSE - NIGHT (PRESENT)

Patrick stands. Focuses on the house.

INT. ABANDONED HOUSE, BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Patrick approaches the broken-out window. Peers out at the muddy puddle a floor below.

There’s glass shards scattered along the area around the puddle.

EXT. ABANDONED HOUSE - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Rachel's body drops two stories. SPLASH. Into a puddle of muddy water.

Glass shards rain down from above. Rachel shields herself. Stares up to the broken window. Relieved.

Then, the pain hits. She reaches for her ankle. Must've twisted on that sick landing.

Through pain she's still able to smile. Happy to be alive.

Her smile quickly melts into alarm as the front door CREAKS open!

Rachel scrambles to her feet. Has to put weight on her ankle. Loses her footing.

SPLASH!

Right back into the muddy puddle. Muddy water drips from Rachel's face and hair.

She reaches for her ankle. The pain's excruciating.

THUMP! THUMP!

The Blood-curdling sound of weighted metal slapping against the wooden stairs.

Rachel musters the strength to look back at --

-- The ASSAILANT making its methodical pursuit. Distorted by the heavy sheets of rain.

Rachel looks ahead. Her Volkswagen is barely visible through the onslaught of rain.

INT. ABANDONED HOUSE, BEDROOM - NIGHT (PRESENT)

Patrick continues staring out the window, unaware of the out-of-focused CHILD-LIKE FIGURE watching from across the room.

Then it moves! Gliding across the floor. It's features taking shape: stringy dark hair. Female. Not much else.

As the Little Girl draws closer, her arms raises, hands outstretched. It actually appears as if she's about to push Patrick out the window!

Patrick's oblivious of the danger looming. Even as the Little Girl moves closer. Closer.

Patrick's startled by the touch from a HAND. Relaxes seeing that it's Officer Daniels.

OFFICER DANIELS
Just came in to check on you.

PATRICK
Thanks. I'm fine.

OFFICER DANIELS
I have the couple's statement. Said they were coming home from the game, when they recognized a vehicle in the driveway. Thought it was abandoned. Saw the body and called it in. They didn't see anything else.

PATRICK
Anyone notify Claire?

OFFICER DANIELS
Thought it might sound better coming from you.
(beat)
I'ma go to the university. Poke around. Ask some questions.

PATRICK
Good idea.

Officer Daniels heads off.

Patrick looks around, suddenly sensing something. Shrugs it off, convincing himself it's nothing. Walks out.

INT. DOREEN'S TAVERN - NIGHT

After hours crowd. Standing room only. It's like the entire town is in here.

Thick cigarette smoke enshrouds the interior. A Surgeon General's nightmare.

Claire expertly mixes multiple drinks. Slides a glass to each PATRON. She's a natural at this. In her element.

Patrick squeezes in between two Patrons. Signals for Claire.

Claire’s busy making drinks. Catches Patrick in her peripheral vision. Has to do a double-take. Can’t believe he’s there. The last person she ever expected to see.

She slides the Patron his drink as she cautiously approaches. Not sure what to expect.

The noise level is so high. Claire and Patrick have to yell when they speak.

CLAIRE
Has to be something urgent if you’re within ten feet of me.

PATRICK
I need you to come with me.

Claire reacts to Patrick’s somber demeanor. Something’s wrong. She waves over the other Bartender. Unties her apron.

INT. MORGUE - NIGHT

A body on the metal table covered by a white sheet. Claire stops before the table. Stares, numb.

She doesn’t react as the body miraculously sits up!

The sheet methodically falls revealing Rachel. Fully clothed. How she appeared before she died. Faces Claire.

RACHEL
I forgive you.

CLAIRE

continues staring at the covered body -- on the slab where it should be. Tears spill from her eyes.

RILEY, 50s, the corner, pulls back the sheet just enough to reveal Rachel’s face.

Claire immediately looks away. Can’t do this. Leaves the room emotionally distraught.

HALL OUTSIDE OF MORGUE -

Patrick stands from his seat as Claire approaches.

Her attempt at a brave face can't mask the overwhelming emotions seeping through.

Patrick moves to comfort her. Claire pulls away, suddenly disgusted.

CLAIRE
You didn't think it was in my best interest to know my daughter was dropping out of school?

Patrick's at a lost for words.

CLAIRE
Did you even try to stop her?
(off his silence)
Answer me you son-of-a-bitch!

But Patrick is unable to form any words. Riley enters from the morgue to investigate the commotion.

CLAIRE
This would've never had happened if you just said something to her. Out of everyone in her life, she would've listened to you.

Claire pushes past Patrick. Leaves in a hurry. Beat.

RILEY
(finally)
Why don't you get some rest. I'll call when have something.

Patrick quietly walks off. Riley looks after him. Feels for the guy.

INT. JENNIFER'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jennifer sleeps amid fluffy comforters and oversized pillows. Her skin is bruise-free. The plaster cast is missing as well.

Jennifer stirs, turning over to the other side of bed. Her arm falls into the emptiness. Clearly someone else is supposed to be there.

Jennifer's opened eyes meet the slept in, though empty, side of bed. She sits up, looking around curiously.

HALLWAY

Jennifer inches along the dark hall. The light fabric of her nightgown outlines her body.

She stops before an opened door, peeks in seeing --

BATHROOM

-- Mason standing before a bathroom mirror. He seems lost in his own reflection...

MASON
I've been thinking.

...until his eyes meet Jennifer watching from the hall.

JENNIFER
Of what?

MASON
How fucking pathetic you are.

Mason's voice has changed considerably, deeper... dangerous... monstrous.

He moves for Jennifer inhumanly fast. Lifting her off her feet and slamming her to the floor, knocking the wind out of her.

Mason's on top of Jennifer before she can react; pinning her to the floor with a hand to the throat.

He SNATCHES OFF HIS FACE, as if wearing a mask, to reveal a horrifying, DEMONIC VISAGE!

As CREATURE lunges for Jennifer, flashing a mouthful of sharp teeth --

INT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

Jennifer snaps up from her seat jarred by the nightmare. At the exact moment, the audience within the theater jolts from a frighting scene on screen.

HENRY smiles at Jennifer's reaction -- glad that she's really into the movie. Comforts her. In good shape for a sixty-year-old. Balding. The Older Man from Jennifer's cubicle picture.

Jennifer relaxes in Henry's arms, still affected by the nightmare.

EXT. INNER HARBOR - LATER

Jennifer and Henry travels along the pedestrian promenade passing Harborplace, a waterfront shopping center.

They're heading in the direction of the Baltimore Science Center.

HENRY
Some movie, huh? I remember when those types of movies didn't bother you as much.

JENNIFER
Like when we stayed up watching "The Exorcist?" I lost count how many times I had to close your eyes.

Henry smiles, remembering. He glances at her cast, and the smile fades.

HENRY
Came to see you at the hospital. Your mother wanted to stay, I convinced her to leave.
(beat)
I try to allow you to handle things yourself, I know that's how are --

JENNIFER
-- Dad, I'm fine.

HENRY
You're not fine.
(re: Jennifer's cast)
That is not fine. I know what's going on, and I'm not putting up with it.

JENNIFER
Dad... I'll handle it.

Henry gives Jennifer a look. His parental instinct to protect is at odds with his need to let go.

JENNIFER
Trust me.

Henry kisses the top of her head. Stops. Gestures to the elevated park in the distance.

JENNIFER
Forget it. I'll be performing CPR on you before you hit the tenth step.

HENRY
I think my ticker can handle it. Whaddya say?

Jennifer smiles, considering.

EXT. FEDERAL HILL PARK - LATER

A large park set on the summit of a towering hill. The one Henry was alluding to.

The entire Inner Harbor could be seen from this height. A truly breathtaking sight that seems almost magical at night.

Jennifer stands near a wooden bench lost in the view. Henry joins her, a little winded, but he's fine.

HENRY
Had you worried for a second, didn't I? Guess there's still gas in this ol' tank.

Jennifer doesn't respond. Henry gives her a look. Clearly something's troubling her.

HENRY
If your face gets any longer, I'll have to scoop it up from the ground.

JENNIFER
I tried to remember something about my life before St. Jude. I couldn't remember one thing.

HENRY
What made you think about the orphanage?

As in reply, Jennifer removes a picture from her jacket pocket and hands it to Henry.

JENNIFER
(pointing)
That's me. Long before I dyed my hair. I've never seen that couple before, though. It looks like I know them, right?

Henry slides into a pair of glasses, studies the unseen picture. Color seems to flush from his skin. It looks like he’s seen a ghost.

HENRY
Where did you get this? Your mother? Patrick?

JENNIFER
No. What’s going on? Who are those people?

Henry looks away, isn’t willing to confide. Jennifer fills in the blanks.

JENNIFER
They’re my real parents, aren’t they?

Henry offers nothing.

JENNIFER
What is it? What happened that was so bad?

Henry hesitantly faces her. He looks at Jennifer as if wanting to say something, but knowing he shouldn’t.

JENNIFER
Dad... talk to me.

Henry’s resistance crumbles under the glare from Jennifer’s pleading eyes.

INT. PUBLIC LIBRARY - DAY

All’s quiet. PEOPLE sit at various desks, silently reading.

TEENAGERS huddled around a computer terminal. GIGGLE collectively.

A LIBRARIAN pushes a book cart along the aisle. “Shhh’s” the Teenagers in passing.

Jennifer sits at a MICROFILM MONITOR. Her leather jacket drapes over the back of her seat.

HENRY (V.O.)
Their name’s were John and Anna Watts. You were born Julia Watts. Your mother and I had your name changed after we moved here.

Jennifer stops at a headline.

CLOSE ON HEADLINE

“Millhaven Tragedy”. Below this is a front page caption of John and Anna.

CLOSE ON ADJOINING ARTICLE

“MILLHAVEN, Maine (AP) - Tragedy strikes in the quiet Millhaven community where Anna Watts, 32, fatally wounded Sheriff Deputy, John Watts, 36, before claiming her own life. Sources say their eight year old daughter was present within the house at the time of the shooting.”

BACK TO SCENE

Jennifer looks away. Can’t read anymore. Can’t stop the tears from falling.

HENRY (V.O.)
No one knows the details of what happened in that house, they only remembered the aftermath.

Emotionally distraught, Jennifer snatches her jacket from the chair. Leaves in a hurry.

EXT. FEDERAL HILL PARK - NIGHT

Henry hands her back the picture. Expels a sigh.

HENRY
That was the one skeleton we wanted kept locked in your closet.

JENNIFER
Don’t you think that was something I should’ve known?

HENRY
We wanted you to live with a sense of normalcy. We did what we thought was best for you.
(beat)
I have to know, where did you get that picture?

Jennifer faces Henry. As she motions to talk --

INT. JENNIFER’S BEDROOM - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Jennifer enters from the adjoining bathroom wrapped in a Terry bathrobe.

She dries her hair with a towel as she crosses to the dresser. Opens a drawer. Sifts through the variety of undergarments.

Her eyes naturally drifts to the mirror.

What she sees in its reflection nearly gives her a heart attack: a LITTLE GIRL positioned bedside, watching. White pajamas. Bare feet. Incredibly, she resembles Julia from the picture.

Jennifer quickly faces the spot where Julia stood. Relaxes finding no one there.

Jennifer pauses seeing something. Inches to the bed noticing the PICTURE:

John, Anna and Julia huddled around a snowman. Big smiles. A presumably happy family.

EXT. FEDERAL HILL PARK - NIGHT (PRESENT)

Henry is completely still. Works to hide his disbelief. His staring makes Jennifer uncomfortable.

JENNIFER
Stop looking at me like that. I’m not crazy.

HENRY
Didn’t say you were.

JENNIFER
Didn’t have to.

HENRY
This is just a little hard to absorb. That’s all.

JENNIFER
I better get going. Thanks for the father, daughter quality time. It was... interesting.

They share a tender hug.

HENRY
You take care of yourself, kiddo.

JENNIFER
Give mom my love.

Henry waves as Jennifer walks off. He turns away, can't hide his concern.

EXT. MILLHAVEN LIGHTHOUSE - NIGHT

The oscillating light shines in intervals from the glass enclosure of this conical tower. It sits at the edge of inland overlooking the coastal waters.

Ashley, in street clothes, stares out into the dark waters shown in fleeting glimpses by the rotating light.

The water looks rough, like a storms brewing.

ASHLEY
I'm convinced you're part blood hound.

Patrick smiles, joining her.

PATRICK
It wasn't that easy, believe me.

ASHLEY
Says the guy who found me and Rachel in that kid's tree house.

PATRICK
Well, that anonymous call did help.

Ashley laughs, remembering.

ASHLEY
We paid the kid to keep quiet. We were so pissed when we saw all those flashing lights. Worst two dollars we ever spent.
(beat)
Did Rachel ever tell you why we did it?

PATRICK
Something about looking for One-Eyed Willie's lost treasure?

Ashley laughs.

ASHLEY
It was right after we saw “The Goonies” for the first time.

PATRICK
I always thought it was a metaphor for something.

ASHLEY
For what? Sex? Drugs? We were freakin’ six at the time.
(beat)
Rachel always had these big dreams. We had this plan of moving to Hollywood and becoming these huge stars. She wanted to be like Julia Roberts, I wanted to be Winona Ryder.
(fighting back the tears)
It’s never easy losing someone, is it chief?

PATRICK
No. It isn’t.

ASHLEY
It’ll get better, right?

Ashley faces him, tearfully. Needs to hear something reassuring.

PATRICK
Eventually.

Beat. Ashley turns back to dark uncertainty of the coastal waters. Allows the tears to fall.

PATRICK
You can take as much time as you need. I’ll be here if you need me.

Patrick starts off for his 4x4. He stops hearing --

ASHLEY
I know you and Claire haven’t been on the best of terms. I just don’t think it’s right for her to face this alone...
(faces him)
...Do you?

That’s a question Patrick isn’t willing to answer.

PATRICK
Try not to stay out here too long. I think there's a storm coming in.

Patrick gets into his 4x4. Pulls off.

INT. JENNIFER'S ROW HOME, FOYER - NIGHT

Mason enters looking like he had a great night out on the town. Makes a beeline for the --

KITCHEN

-- where he opens the refrigerator, and pulls from it a can of beer. Cracks it open, finishing it without taking a breath. Belches. Just what he needed.

UPSTAIRS

Mason reaches the top of the stairs. There's a light pouring out from one of the rooms.

He heads in that direction, looking into --

JENNIFER'S BEDROOM

-- where Jennifer, in street clothes, sits at the foot of bed watching him, expectantly. Lit cigarette in hand.

MASON
You waited up for me, how sweet.

Jennifer stops him as she speaks. Her voice calm, controlled.

JENNIFER
You meet this guy for the first time, and he offers you a drink. You try to resist his charms, but it's his smile that captures you...

Mason looks at Jennifer like she's lost her mind.

MASON
You've been smoking that shit?

Jennifer doesn't respond to the jab. Keeps her cool. Remains focused on her words.

JENNIFER
...He treats you like you're the most important thing in the world, and you believe it. You tell yourself you love him, and no one could ever love you the way he does. Then he hits you for the first time, tells you it'll never happen again...

Mason raises an eyebrow to this. Finally gets it.

JENNIFER
...And you believe him, but then it happens again. He tells you, "no one wants you," that you're ugly, and you believe him. And all the while you're wondering, "whatever happened to that wonderful guy that offered you that drink?" Truth is, he was never there.

MASON
Boy, someone loves the sound of their own voice. Is it okay for me to go the fuck asleep now?

JENNIFER
It was Brooke. She told you I got fired.

Mason unbuttons his shirt. Shrugs.

MASON
So we talked. Who gives a shit.

JENNIFER
When does talking involve penetrating her vagina with your penis?

Mason cuts Jennifer a dangerous look.

MASON
Careful.

Mason removes his shirt as he heads for bed. Stops. Finally noticing the packed suitcase.

MASON
Going somewhere?

JENNIFER
(pointedly)
I'm not going anywhere.

Mason gets it. Points to the suitcase, half-amused.

MASON
All my stuff’s in here?

Jennifer sees something in Mason’s eyes that prompts her to lower her cigarette. She still isn’t prepared for the PUNCH that knocks her off the bed.

In a rage, Mason grabs Jennifer by her shirt, lifts her from the floor, and SLINGS her body to the wall.

The plaster cracks. Her body drops to the floor, hard. The wind knocked out of her.

Jennifer isn’t able to recover, because Mason’s right back on her. Pinning her to the floor with a firm hand to her throat.

His clenched fist rears back. Jennifer beats him to it. Cracks him aside the head with her cast.

Mason stumbles back, taking off guard. Jennifer kicks him the rest of the way to the floor.

Mason stirs, recovering from Jennifer’s attack. Touches the blood trickling from his head wound.

His eyes widen seeing the blood, in a manic rage.

Mason pushes up from the floor, charging Jennifer as she staggers into the --

HALL

-- Jennifer stops involuntarily, pulled by her hair from behind. Mason spins her around, and drops her with a punch.

Mason taps his hand to the blood on his head.

MASON
You must’ve lost your everlasting mind.
How am I gonna explain this at work?

He buries a boot into her gut, forcing a painful cry from Jennifer’s lips.

She immediately reaches for her ribs. Might’ve broken something.

MASON
You hear me talkin’ to you?!

Jennifer writhes in pain, caressing her stomach. Tears escape from her eyes.

Mason kneels, savoring his superior position.

MASON
You're gonna get your skinny ass back in there, take all of my shit and put it back where you found it. And not one thing better be wrinkled. You hear me?

The pain won't allow her to answer, which infuriates Mason even more.

He slaps her aside the head to get her attention.

MASON
You hear me?!

Jennifer mumbles something through pain. Barely audible.

MASON
What the fuck you say?

Jennifer mumbles again. Mason has to lean closer.

MASON
What?

JENNIFER
(through gritted teeth)
Go fuck yourself.

Jennifer, using all the strength she can muster, catches Mason off-guard with a cast to the jaw, knocking him onto the floor.

Jennifer focuses on the stairs. Just a couple feet away. Tries to stand, the pain shooting from her ribs makes her reconsider.

She moves along the floor, fighting for every inch.

Mason recovers. Spits out blood. There's a tooth in there.

Enraged, he pursues Jennifer along the floor. Makes a desperate lunge for her.

Misses her by mere inches as her body disappears down the stairs.

FOYER

Jennifer’s body tumbles down the stairs, hitting the floor, hard.

Jennifer lies there for a long moment. Her face contorted in pain. Really favoring her ribs.

Oblivious of Mason descending the stairs. Each step more purposeful than the last.

Jennifer forces her body to move. Screams out, feeling the pressure of Mason’s foot her back.

He kicks her over so that she’s now facing him.

MASON
I’ma teach you to respect me --

Mason’s last word is sucked with him as he’s yanked into the darkness by some mysterious force.

Jennifer stares for a moment, trying to process what just happened. Doesn’t ask any questions.

She makes her painfully escape as --

-- Mason’s body goes some three feet into the air and crashes onto the floor; his momentum carrying him another two feet into the --

KITCHEN

-- Mason sits up from the floor. Fearful of what it might’ve been. Too strong to be human.

He spots Jennifer staggering out the door in the distance.

MASON
Jen! There’s something in here! Don’t leave me!

Jennifer doesn’t look back. He loses sight of her as she descends the front steps.

MASON
Bitch!

Mason scrambles to his feet. Pulls open a drawer too quickly. It flies out from its compartment onto the floor.

Kitchen utensils CLATTER on the floor.

MASON
Fuck.

Mason kneels, fumbling in the darkness for something to arm himself with. Grabs an 8” chef’s knife.

Mason stands, empowered. Ready for anything, except --

-- the sound of BONE SNAPPING.

Mason belts a pain-filled yell as crumbles to the floor, immediately reaching for his leg -- bloodied bone jut through his jeans. The pain is excruciating.

Mason collapses from the effort, staring into the cold, black eyes of his harbinger of death. Accepts his fate.

There is a sickening CRUNCH OF BONE as the SLEDGEHAMMER drives into his skull.

INT. CLAIRE’S HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Claire’s on the sofa finishing off whatever’s left in the wine bottle. Adds to the empty bottles already cluttering the coffee table.

She aims the remote at the 42” flat-screen. Flips through channels. Stops on a news broadcast.

A NEWS REPORTER stands outside of the Watts property. The daylight suggests it was filmed earlier in the day.

Claire points the remote at the television to raise the volume.

NEWS REPORTER
I’m outside of an abandoned house, off Route 70, where the body of local Millhaven University student, Rachel Tate, was found brutally murdered.

A SNAP SHOT of Rachel’s smiling face appears on screen. It FADES returning to the News Reporter.

NEWS REPORTER
Details of this vicious crime remain sketchy at best. At this time, there has been no arrest made.
(MORE)

NEWS REPORTER (CONT'D)
Millhaven police are said to be aggressively following up on all leads, and are employing anyone with information to call them immediately. With this murder, this peaceful Millhaven community is once again thrust into a negative light. It was no more than twenty years ago that a tragic murder-suicide took place at this very location --

The television turns off abruptly. Claire's reflection is visible from the television's darken screen.

She drops the remote, startled, noticing someone else standing behind her; reflected from the television, observantly watching.

At first glance, it appears to be Julia.

Claire self-consciously turns. Nearly jumps out of her skin --

CLAIRE
For fucks sake!

She relaxes a bit, thankful that it's Patrick. But, has to ask:

CLAIRE
How did you get in here?

PATRICK
Rachel made a key. Thought it'd be nice for me to check in on you every now and again while she was away.

CLAIRE
And you're just telling me this now, because...?

PATRICK
You wanted to know how I got in here.

Good point. Claire gestures for the key anyway.

CLAIRE
You shouldn't have that.

Patrick hands her the key understanding.

PATRICK
I know I'm not your favorite person in the world right now.
(MORE)

PATRICK (CONT'D)
I just wanted to make sure you were okay.
I know this is hard for you.

CLAIRE
You didn't need to come here, Pat. They invented phones for a reason.

PATRICK
Would you had picked up?

Claire gives him a look. Can't argue that point.

CLAIRE
I'm great, Pat. Thanks for coming. Lock the door on your way out.

Patrick starts to say something else. Reconsiders. Heads for the door.

Claire follows him with her eyes. There's something on her mind.

CLAIRE
Did you know that Rachel had her first kiss when she was twelve...?

Patrick stops at the door. Faces Claire. From the look on his face, he did.

CLAIRE
...Or, that she had her belly button pierced when she was sixteen?

Though he doesn't say, it's clear that he was aware.

Claire watches Patrick's reaction closely, as she says:

CLAIRE
Did you know she lost her virginity in her bedroom... while I was home?

Patrick raises an eyebrow. That was something he didn't know.

CLAIRE
I guess I didn't know her as much as I thought. If I did, I would've known how unhappy she was... and how much she hated me.

Patrick watches Claire, silently. Knows he should say something reassuring. Can't bring himself to do it.

CLAIRE
You can't do it, can you? It's like if you say something nice to me, the world's gonna explode or something. Why are you still harboring so much contempt for me? Don't you think I've suffered enough?

Patrick fixes to say something; possibly something meaningful. But, something prevents him.

CLAIRE
Why are you here, Pat? Why are you really here? Were really you worried about me, or did you come here to take advantage of me in my vulnerable condition?

Patrick looks away. Unsure how to respond.

CLAIRE
Is that it? Do you want me?
(beat)
Tell me you want me.

Patrick stares deep into Claire's pleading, emotional eyes. All of her pain on full display.

Claire looks at him, expectantly, as he says:

PATRICK
Claire... I'm sorry.

Not what she wanted to hear. Patrick motions to leave, but Claire stops him -- not willing to let this moment pass without a fight.

She kisses him full on the lips. There's real passion behind it.

Patrick withdraws. Taken aback at first, but there's something there.

Patrick's emotional guard wanes. As much as he fights his urge, he's unable to stop himself from --

-- KISSING Claire. A little awkward at first -- it's been awhile and it shows.

He relaxes and allows Claire to take the lead. They fall onto the sofa surrendering to their rekindled passion.

Claire raises her arms for Patrick to remove her shirt. In doing so, she blindly hits a bottle causing a chain reaction that knocks over the other bottles.

Forces them to stop.

Patrick reaches to pick up the bottle. Pauses. Focuses on something in the television's vicinity. Whatever it is causes his demeanor to change.

He sits up the bottle. Moves away from Claire taking the intimacy of the moment with him.

Patrick's cell phone VIBRATES. Checks the caller's screen. Recognizes Riley's name.

PATRICK
I have to go.

Patrick leaves quickly. No goodbye.

Claire looks in the direction Patrick was facing.

A number of framed pictures line the shelf above the television.

The majority are of Rachel at different ages. Different settings: graduating high school, outside of a Dealer's lot posing next to her Beetle, etc. Very photogenic.

One picture stands out: Patrick and Claire share a picnic bench with Anna and John. All smiles.

John and Patrick. Seated alongside each other. The best of friends.

INT. HOSPITAL, PATIENT'S ROOM - NIGHT

The sound of a TOILET FLUSHING. Jennifer emerges from behind a door in a patient's gown.

She gingerly walks to her bed, still feeling the effects from that hellacious battle. Stops. Notices a well-dressed gentleman waiting for her at bedside. Early thirties. DETECTIVE BEANO.

Jennifer eases herself into bed, not in the mood.

JENNIFER
I already gave my statement.

BEANO
There was an altercation, you tried to escape, your boyfriend slip in the kitchen, broke his leg in two places, and crushed his face on your kitchen floor. I read it.

Jennifer laughs. Knows exactly where this is going.

BEANO
Find something funny, Ms. Roman? Tell me. I’m a sucker for a good joke.

JENNIFER
You want to see the punch line?

Jennifer gingerly sits up, reveals the multiple contusions along her arm.

JENNIFER
And if you think that’s hilarious, you’ll love this.

Jennifer leaves bed, turns, opens her gown, revealing more along her back.

JENNIFER
Mason doesn’t deserve any investigation. He doesn’t deserve anyone’s remorse. He’s prick who treated me like shit. So excuse me for not shedding a tear because the fucker’s not breathing anymore.

BEANO
I would love to chalk up this little mishap as some kind of cosmic karma, I really would, but I can’t. I have two homicides in my lap...
(off Jennifer’s look)
... that’s right, two. A traffic officer found a BMW registered to a Brooke Leighton burned to shit off Annapolis road. She was identified by her dental records.

Jennifer slumps to the bed. Tears involuntarily fall from her eyes.

BEANO
You were friends, right? You worked with her for six years. She stayed at your bedside until you woke. So what happened? What soured the relationship?
(MORE)

BEANO (CONT'D)
A nurse overhead you both arguing on the night of her murder.

JENNIFER
I was still in the hospital.

BEANO
That doesn’t mean you didn’t have a hand in it.

JENNIFER
Look, if you got something on me, charge me. If not, get the fuck out. I’m not playing this game with you.

Jennifer eases herself back into bed.

BEANO
We aren’t done until I say we are. I’m in charge here, Ms. Roman. So if I ask you a question, you damn better answer it.

JENNIFER
I didn’t kill Mason.

Beano leans forward, arms folded.

BEANO
Convince me.

HENRY (O.S.)
Beano?

Beano looks up. Not too enthused to see Henry walking in.

BEANO
Henry Roman. Guys at the station still ask about you. How’s retirement?

HENRY
Cut the shit. My daughter’s the victim here.

BEANO
Actually, there are two victims, and your daughter’s connected to both.

HENRY
Jennifer’s the victim. It doesn’t matter how deep you look, that’s all you’ll find and you know it.

BEANO
Hope you're right, Henry. It'd be a shame to arrest the daughter of a dear friend.
(to Jennifer)
I'll keep in touch.
(to Henry)
Nice seeing you again.

HENRY
(softly)
Go fuck yourself.

Beano doesn't hear him; if he did, he doesn't make it obvious.

Henry's eyes follow Beano as he leaves the room.

HENRY
You should see how he treats someone he really likes.

INT. MORGUE - NIGHT

Riley's at his desk in the middle of dinner: hoagie and chips. He's interrupted by Patrick sauntering in with a severe Claire hangover.

RILEY
You should try herbal tea with a little honey and lemon. Clear that right up.

PATRICK
Nothing you have could get rid of this.

RILEY
Does <u>this</u> have anything to do with Claire?

This is the last conversation he wants to get into. Patrick casually brushes off the question.

PATRICK
Whatcha got?

RILEY
If you need someone to talk to --

PATRICK
-- I know. Whatcha got?

Riley hands Patrick an X-RAY of a human skull, presumably Rachel's.

Patrick slides into his glasses as he holds the X-ray into the light: a Townes (back) view of the skull. A complete circular hole in the parietal bone.

RILEY
That's what's known as a decompressed skull fracture. The section of her skull was pushed inward against the brain. This required considerable force.

Patrick lowers the X-ray.

PATRICK
Any theories on the weapon used?

RILEY
From the shape and depth of the fracture, I'd be looking for something large and weighed.

PATRICK
Like a sledgehammer.

Riley throws Patrick a curious look in response to his "on the nose" answer.

RILEY
Exactly.

Patrick has a thought. Can't shake it. "Thanks" Riley as he hurries off.

EXT. ABANDONED HOUSE - NIGHT

Heavy rain. Lighting arcs punctuate the ominous mood. A Millhaven police cruiser parks in the driveway.

Patrick leaves from his vehicle. Runs toward the house. Stops halfway there. Focuses on the shed.

INT. SHED - MOMENTS LATER

A STEADY STREAM of LIGHT washes over various tools and equipment cluttering homemade shelves.

PATRICK

sweeps the flashlight over the various equipment. Holds the light on something.

The stream of light frames the SLEDGEHAMMER resting in a corner. Dried blood stains the metal head. “To a trusted friend” expertly engraved on its hickory wood handle.

PATRICK
Son of a bitch.

Patrick snatches a discarded rag. Wraps it around the bloodied metal head. Picks up the hammer.

The shed door swings open abruptly. Startles him. Quickly shines the light on the entrance.

The wind forcibly opens and close the door.

Patrick lowers the light, relieved. Tucks the covered hammer within his jacket.

INT. PATRICK’S 4X4 - MOMENTS LATER

Patrick places the sledgehammer carefully in the backseat. Looks ahead. Keys the ignition.

FROM THE BACKSEAT

CHILD-LIKE HANDS, scarred with black veins, remove the rag placed around the sledgehammer’s head.

Patrick’s eyes naturally drift into the overhead mirror.

There’s movement in the darkness of the backseat, then he gets a glimpse of something moving toward him with great speed.

He ducks instinctively. Nearly struck by the swinging SLEDGEHAMMER.

The driver’s side window wasn’t so lucky. SHATTERS on impact.

Patrick quickly slides over to the passenger seat. Shoves open the door. Drops to the muddy ground.

Right before a PAIR OF SMALL FEET buried beneath an inch of mud.

Alongside the feet is the sledgehammer. The rain makes the dried blood on the metal slick.

Patrick’s eyes searches for the identity of the perpetrator, but it’s hidden within natural darkness.

LIGHTING ARC scorches the sky as the sledgehammer is hoisted into the air.

Patrick raises his head from the ground. Nearly blinded by a vehicle’s headlights.

Ashley, in street clothes, exits her Kia Sportage.

Patrick searches for the assailant and sledgehammer. Both are gone.

ASHLEY
Chief?

Patrick responds by collapsing into the mud. Exhausted.

EXT. ABANDONED HOUSE - LATER

A rare break from the rain. Patrick sits on a gurney in the back of an ambulance being tended to by PARAMEDICS.

Ashley faces away the ambulance. Plays spider solitaire on her iPhone as she waits.

After a moment, Ashley looks into the ambulance to check on Patrick’s progress. He’s gone.

The Paramedic gestures to Patrick heading for his 4x4.

INT. ABANDONED HOUSE, CHILD’S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Officer Daniels enters, sweeping his flashlight around the room.

Devoid of any furnishings. Discolored, children’s wallpaper hangs off the walls. Boarded windows.

Not seeing anything, he goes to the bordered window. Peeks between the openings separating the wood.

It looks out into the back area of the house. Nothing but acres of uninterrupted land, and darkness.

Officer Daniels continues staring out, oblivious of the closet door opening in the distance.

The hinges of the door CREAKS. Officer Daniels turns quickly reacting to the sound.

The light frames the now closed closet door. Officer Daniels unsnaps his holster as he moves cautiously for the door.

He stops at the door. Expels a breath. Places the flashlight in his mouth, securing it with his teeth. Freeing his hands.

His quivering hand hovers over his holstered revolver as he reaches for the knob. Turns it slowly. Pulls back quickly...

The light illuminates the empty interior of the closet.

Officer Daniels relaxes.

Removes the flashlight from his mouth. Speaks into his portable as he closes the door, convincing himself it was just his imagination.

OFFICER DANIELS
(into his portable)
All clear in here, chief.

He walks away from the door, taking the only source of light with him.

Not before, briefly, revealing "Julia" standing behind him!

EXT. ABANDONED HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Patrick's near his 4x4. He kneels at the spot where his attacker stood.

There should be some kind of impression left in the mud, but there isn't.

He feels the wet, muddy earth, confused. Stands, acknowledging Officer Daniels leaving the house.

OFFICER DANIELS
All clear, chief.

Patrick nods, then heads for the shed.

INT. SHED - CONTINUOUS

Patrick removes his flashlight and heads to the corner where he found the sledgehammer. Concentrates the light on the now vacant area.

Curses to himself. Heads back to the door, but Ashley blocks the way out.

ASHLEY
What were you looking for?

Patrick regards Ashley. It doesn't look like she's in the mood for bullshit.

PATRICK
A sledgehammer.

ASHLEY
Is that what killed Rachel?

PATRICK
I believe so.
(beat)
How did you know I'd be here?

ASHLEY
I didn't. I couldn't sleep. I kept thinking about Rachel's body dangling from her car window. I thought if came here, I would find something that could help me catch the bastard that did this.
(beat)
How did you know the sledgehammer would be here?

PATRICK
A hunch.

Patrick brushes past Ashley as he leaves.

EXT. ABANDONED HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Patrick heads for his vehicle, Ashley follows.

ASHLEY
It was more than just a hunch. My dad told me all about it. You were best friends. You introduced the guy to his wife, for Pete's sake.

Patrick doesn't break stride. Tries his best to ignore her.

ASHLEY
I also know about the little girl who watched the whole thing -- Julia. She has to be, what, in her late twenties now?

This stops Patrick.

PATRICK
She had nothing to do with this.

ASHLEY
Let's see... the house, the sledgehammer, my best friend's murder... I say that makes her one helluva prime suspect.

PATRICK
You forgot about motive.

Patrick continues for his 4x4. Ashley follows.

ASHLEY
Maybe she can fill in the blanks for us. It's worth bringing her in.

PATRICK
I can't do that.

ASHLEY
You can't or you won't?
(off his silence)
You're protecting her, aren't you? My best friend's in the morgue, and you're protecting her possible killer?

Patrick stops.

PATRICK
Rachel was my daughter! I loved her more than anything in this world.

ASHLEY
Let me bring in John's daughter. See what she knows.

PATRICK
Go right ahead. You should get to her in about nine hours.
(off Ashley's look)
She's in Baltimore. Julia was adopted six months after that incident. She's been living there with her adoptive family ever since.

ASHLEY
How do you know she's still there?

PATRICK
I talk to her folks when I can, to check in on her. Been doing that since she moved away. Last I heard, she was still in Baltimore doing well.

ASHLEY
How long ago was that?

PATRICK
I got off the phone with them a half an hour before Rachel came into my office. Is that good enough for you?

Patrick leaves her with that. After a moment, Ashley follows after him.

INT. ABANDONED HOUSE, BEDROOM - LATER

A CHILD’S HAND parts the curtain. Watches Patrick’s 4x4 and Ashley’s Sportage leave the property.

EXT./INT. JENNIFER’S NEIGHBORHOOD/’67 MUSTANG - NIGHT

A ‘67 Mustang parks in front of Jennifer’s row home.

INSIDE ‘67 MUSTANG -

Henry’s at the wheel. He glances over at Jennifer as she stares out toward her home, deep in thought.

After a moment:

HENRY
If you’re worried about Beano, don’t. It was more about me than you.

JENNIFER
I can give a shit less about that dickhead.

Henry watches Jennifer for a moment. Has a thought. Makes a decision, then:

HENRY
They told us you were evaluated by a psychiatrist before you were adopted.

Jennifer finally turns to Henry.

HENRY
Doctor Michaels. Vincent Michaels. He worked at the Landsdowning institution at that time. They said it was for a routine psychological assessment. They wanted to make certain you were psychologically stable enough for adoption.

JENNIFER
Why are you telling me this?

HENRY
I thought it was something you could use once you got to Millhaven.
(off Jennifer's look)
If I was in your position, I'd be looking for answers as well.

Jennifer smiles appreciatively.

HENRY
I also want you to have this.

Henry turns, reaching into the backseat. When he faces Jennifer, he holds a metal case. Offers it to her.

Jennifer opens the case to reveal, a snub-nosed revolver and a box of bullets.

HENRY
Just in case.

JENNIFER
Love you.

Jennifer kisses him on the cheek.

HENRY
Watch yourself out there, kiddo.

Henry's smile fades as Jennifer leaves the car, replaced by genuine concern.

EXT. BRIDGE - DAY

The rain has returned. If possible, heavier than before. Jennifer's Prius trudges through the downpour.

EXT. RURAL ROAD - DAY

Dense, lush forest sandwich the isolated, winding road. Everything is wet and drenched in shade.

An elaborate sign is planted roadside, welcoming all to “MILLHAVEN, population 3,614. Home of the cross-county champion Millhaven Pirates.”

Spray of water kicks up from the road and splashes the sign as Jennifer’s Prius screams past.

EXT. MILLHAVEN INN - DAY

A sign just above the building reads: MILLHAVEN INN. A roadside motel located just off the main road into town.

Jennifer’s Prius is one of many parked within its parking lot.

INT. MILLHAVEN INN, JENNIFER’S ROOM - LATER

Moderately spaced, contemporarily furnished. Jennifer enters pulling a small suitcase.

She abandons it at the foot of the bed. Opens the bedside table drawer, removes the Yellow Pages phone book, and takes it with her as she sits.

Jennifer flips through its pages, searching. Stops on a page. Holds a finger on what she’s looking for: Landsdowining Mental Institution.

EXT. LANDSDOWNING MENTAL INSTITUTION - DAY

An imposing ten foot wall of solid brick topped with concertina wire encloses the entire compound.

The nearly faded words of LANDSDOWNING MENTAL INSTITUTION can be read within the brick make up of the wall.

Beyond the gate, is a winding road that leads to the institution compound: a four story complex. Institutional brick. Barred windows.

As inviting as a midnight stroll through a cemetery.

DR. ADLER (V.O.)
Dr. Vincent Michaels? I haven’t heard that name around here in years.

INT. INSTITUTION, JUVENILE WING - CONTINUOUS

DR. ADLER, late-forties, escorts Jennifer along this narrow corridor flanked by barred windows and sterile white walls.

Jennifer has a visitor’s sticker on her jacket. The name “JULIA” is markered on it.

DR. ADLER
His work in psychology was nothing short of extraordinary. We dedicated a wing in his honor.

JENNIFER
That’s fascinating. Where is he now?

Dr. Adler offers her a curious look. Can’t be from around here.

DR. ADLER
What’s your interest with Dr. Michaels?

JENNIFER
I was a patient of his some years ago.

Dr. Adler stops. Regards Jennifer, intrigued.

DR. ADLER
And yet you’re here talking to me. Where did you say you were from again?

Jennifer doesn’t answer. Focuses on something down the hall.

HER POV - CROWDED CORRIDOR

What appears to be Julia watches Jennifer from the far end of the corridor.

JUVENILE PATIENTS move back and forth across the corridor affording mere glimpses of the child: white pajamas. Dark hair. Alabaster skin marred with black veins. Black, pupil-less eyes.

JENNIFER

inches forward. A bit self-conscious. Not sure if she’s seeing what she’s seeing.

Dr. Adler watches her, worried.

DR. ADLER
Ms. Watts?

She doesn’t respond. Her focus is on what’s down the corridor.

JENNIFER’S POV - CROWDED CORRIDOR

The Patients continue their bustle. No sign of “Julia”.

DR. ADLER (O.S.)
Ms. Watts?

Jennifer faces Dr. Adler.

DR. ADLER
Are you okay?

Jennifer looks back down the corridor for reassurance. The corridor is now clear.

JENNIFER
It’s very important that I find Dr. Michaels. Will you help me?

Dr. Adler stares into Jennifer’s pleading eyes.

INT. DR. MICHAELS OFFICE, LOBBY - DAY

A quaint space where an over-worked SECRETARY sits typing something on the computer.

A couple of feet away is a frosted glass door with the name DR. VINCENT MICHAELS stenciled across.

The Secretary looks up from her computer to see Jennifer standing in front of her.

JENNIFER
Hi. My name’s Jen -- Julia... Julia Watts.

The Secretary types the name. Can’t find it anywhere on the computer.

JENNIFER
I don't have an appointment.

SECRETARY
I'm sorry, Dr. Michaels isn't accepting new patients at this time --

JENNIFER
I'm not exactly a new patient.

The Secretary rolls her eyes, irritated. Doesn't have time for this.

SECRETARY
Either you are or you aren't.

JENNIFER
I'm not. I've been seen before.

SECRETARY
How long has it been since you were last seen?

JENNIFER
About twenty years.

The Secretary raises an eyebrow. DR. VINCENT MICHAELS, 60s, pokes his head from the office. Gray hair. Full beard. Glasses. Cardigan sweater.

DR. MICHAELS
Sophia. Notify me if a woman by the name of Julia Watts shows up in this office.

SECRETARY/SOPHIA
She's already here.

Dr. Michaels regards Jennifer for a moment. Adjusts his glasses. It can't be, can it?

DR. MICHAELS
Julia Watts?

INT. DR. MICHAELS' OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Various degrees hang neatly along the earth-colored walls. Potted plants hang from the windows.

DR. MICHAELS
I heard you paid a visit to Landsdowning today. Talked to a Dr. Adler?

Dr. Michaels offers Jennifer a seat. Jennifer sits as he circles around his desk, eases into a leather chair and closes the folder.

DR. MICHAELS
I was told you moved away. Lived in Baltimore, I believe.
(re: Jennifer's cast)
All's well I hope.

JENNIFER
Could be better.

Jennifer notices the name "JULIA WATTS" on the front of the folder on his desk.

JENNIFER
That's my personal file?

DR. MICHAELS
It contains your entire psychiatric history under my care.

JENNIFER
Could I?

Dr. Michaels graciously slides the folder over to Jennifer. As she reads...

JENNIFER
You diagnosed me with Dissociative Identity Disorder?

DR. MICHAELS
She called herself, "Melissa." Cold. Malevolent. Highly volatile. She was very protective of you. She became highly agitated when it appeared you were being threatened.

JENNIFER
Like a guard dog?

DR. MICHAELS
To a certain extent, yes.

JENNIFER
I've been seeing things lately.

Dr. Michaels eases forward in his seat, intrigued.

DR. MICHAELS
What kind of things?

Jennifer places the folder on the desk. Hands him the picture.

JENNIFER
That little girl.

Dr. Michaels adjusts his glasses as he studies the picture. Gives Jennifer a look.

DR. MICHAELS
You've seen this little girl? Where exactly?

JENNIFER
In my bedroom. At Landsdowning. She left me that as a parting gift.

Dr. Michaels slides the picture back to her.

DR. MICHAELS
What you saw was what the "Melissa" identity wanted you to see. It's quite possible she's on the verge of resurfacing.

JENNIFER
Wait. You're saying the little girl trolling me is actually a figment of my imagination?

DR. MICHAELS
She's a personality with her own experiences. To her, she is real.

JENNIFER
There was something in your notes about "integrating the personalities."

DR. MICHAELS
I determined the source of your trauma occurred a few years prior to that murder-suicide incident. My intention was to isolate that portion of your memory and suppress it.

JENNIFER
By "suppress" you mean, erase?

DR. MICHAELS
Yes.

JENNIFER
Congratulations, you did it. Job well done. You erased that portion of my memory... along with the memory of my entire childhood.

DR. MICHAELS
That was... unexpected. My goal was for you to have a sense of normalcy in your life, and to that extent, it appears I was successful.

JENNIFER
Successful? You call what you did a success? Do you see this...?

Jennifer points to the picture on his desk.

JENNIFER
...This is what you stole from me.

DR. MICHAELS
Look at your life, Ms. Watts. You're living proof that my procedure works. You've become a better person because of it, have you not?

JENNIFER
You're insane.

Jennifer stands. Motions to leave.

DR. MICHAELS
I can help you, Ms. Watts.

Jennifer stops.

DR. MICHAELS
I was able to suppress the Melissa identity before. If I knew what triggered her resurrection, I could suppress her again. Everything would be as it once was. You could have your life back.

JENNIFER
My life isn't so great, Doc.

Jennifer leaves. Allows the door to SLAM behind her.

INT. MILLHAVEN INN, JENNIFER’S ROOM - LATER

Jennifer enters. Casually removing her jacket, allows it to drop to the floor as she slinks to the bed, and drops back. Exhausted.

Momentarily forgetting about that pain. Jennifer winces, immediately reminded. Holds her hand to her side. Ribs still tender.

She reaches into her pants pocket for something. Doesn’t feel it initially. Sits up, gingerly, to search more thoroughly. Can’t find it.

Goes to the floor. Checks her jacket pockets, frantically. Not in there. She thinks for a moment, then it comes to her.

Jennifer slides into her jacket as she leaves the room.

INT. DR. MICHAELS’ OFFICE - LATER

Dr. Michaels studies the picture Jennifer left on his desk, oblivious of the door near the entrance opening.

The door hinges CREAK. Dr. Michaels lowers the picture finally noticing the door opening fully.

DR. MICHAELS

Sophia?

There’s no answer. Dr. Michaels leaves his desk to investigate.

ADJOINING BATHROOM

Dr. Michaels stands in the doorway. Flips on the light. Studies the empty room. Nothing seems off.

He enters fully. Gives everything a once over. Convinces himself its nothing.

He passes the wall mirror as he heads for the entrance. Stops abruptly noticing something. Backpedals to the mirror to investigate.

There’s a DARK BLOTCH at its center. He rubs his finger over it. It doesn’t smudge. Doesn’t wipe off.

He wets his finger with his tongue. Tries again. The BLOTCH is still there. That’s weird.

DR. MICHAELS
What is that?

He rubs again, putting a little muscle in it. Determine to rid the mirror of its blemish.

He stops abruptly noticing that the once small blotch begins spreading wider and wider. Until the entire mirror’s consumed.

Curiosity impels him to touch the mirror. But he pulls back seeing something within its darkness -- A PAIR OF PIERCING RED EYES burning like lit embers.

Dr. Michaels backpedals from the mirror as the FIGURE lurking within it HURLS ITSELF AT HIM.

As the SMALL BODY clears the mirror, the glass reforms instantaneously.

SLAMS Dr. Michaels’ body into the far wall. He slumps to the floor, barely conscious.

Dr. Michaels raises his half-closed eyes to --

-- the SLEDGEHAMMER HEAD coming at him full speed.

Doesn’t have time to scream or react as it CRUSHES his skull against the wall.

INT. DR. MICHAELS’ OFFICE, LOBBY - LATER

Sophia’s gathering her stuff ready to go home for the evening. She removes her heels and slides her tired feet into a pair of tennis shoes.

She looks up, mid-motion, and notices Jennifer standing before her desk.

SOPHIA
(perfunctorily)
Office hours are from nine --

JENNIFER
I think Dr. Michaels still has my picture.

Sophia shrugs. Doesn’t really care one way or the other. As far as she’s concerned, she’s off the clock.

SOPHIA
I'll let him know. You can pick it up during our regular hours of business.

JENNIFER
Please. It means a lot to me.

Sophia sighs, realizing Jennifer's not going to let this go. She leans to speak into the intercom.

SOPHIA
(into the intercom)
Dr. Michaels, Ms. Watts says she left a picture in your office.

Sophia stands. Slides into her jacket as she waits for a reply that never comes.

SOPHIA
Dr. Michaels?
(still nothing; to Jennifer)
One moment.

Sophia gently knocks on the door.

SOPHIA
Dr. Michaels?

Not hearing a reply, she opens the door and walks into --

DR. MICHAELS' OFFICE

-- passing the opened bathroom door.

She gives the room a once over. No sign of Dr. Michaels, but she does find Jennifer's picture lying absently on the desk.

Sophia scoops up the picture and heads for the door. She passes the opened bathroom again.

This time she actually stops seeing something in her peripheral vision. Doubles back.

What she sees causes her to SCREAM IN HORROR --

INT. DR. MICHAELS' OFFICE, ADJOINING BATHROOM - NIGHT

-- The SCREAMING FADES, replaced by silence. Patrick kneels before what's left of Dr. Michaels' CRATERED, BLOODIED FACE.

Examines it with a practiced eye.

PATRICK
You sure no one else was in here?

He looks back at Ashley who stands behind him.

ASHLEY
The doctor was seeing a patient an hour before. According to the secretary, she came back for this.

Ashley hands Patrick an evidence bag. Inside is the picture Jennifer left.

Patrick takes the bag recognizes the picture. Focuses on Julia smiling, lost in the picture.

EXT. ABANDONED HOUSE - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Patrick's on the muddy ground inches from his police cruiser. He looks up at the unseen killer hidden with the natural darkness.

Until the LIGHTNING ARC affords a glimpse of ASSAILANT hoisting the sledgehammer. It resembles Julia.

ASHLEY (V.O.)
Pat?

INT. ADJOINING BATHROOM (PRESENT)

Ashley's voice brings Patrick back to reality. Can't seem to shake the vision.

Ashley watches him, genuine concerned.

ASHLEY
Chief, when was the last time you actually slept?

PATRICK
I'm fine, Ash.

Patrick stands. Holds onto the evidence-bagged picture.

PATRICK
I want the name and whereabouts of his last patient.

ASHLEY
That won't be too hard, she's still here. Daniels' got her outside.

PATRICK
Who is she? Is she local?

ASHLEY
According to you, she's supposed to be in Baltimore.

PATRICK
Julia? Julia's here?

ASHLEY
Helluva coincidence, isn't it?

PATRICK
I'm sure there's a reasonable explanation.

ASHLEY
C'mon, chief. The writing's on the wall. It's her. It's always been her.

PATRICK
I'll talk to her, see what she knows. We'll take it from there.

Ashley watches him leave, irritated.

EXT. DR. MICHAELS' OFFICE - LATER

There's a heavy police presence around Dr. Michael's office building, well, heavy for Millhaven standards.

PEDESTRIANS rubberneck from beyond the police line. TEENAGERS, on their bikes, angle their cell phones, recording.

Jennifer sits in the driver's seat of her Prius, door ajar, facing Officer Daniels as he speaks to her.

PATRICK (O.S.)
Julia?

Jennifer brightens seeing Patrick approaching. She stands. They hug.

Patrick pulls away feeling Jennifer's body jerk. Examines her pain-ridden face in worry. He then notices the cast.

PATRICK
Jesus. You alright?

JENNIFER
I think my parents were onto something when they were talking about looking both ways.
(beat)
It's Jennifer now, by the way.

PATRICK
Sorry, old habit.
(to Officer Daniels)
I can take it from here.

Patrick waits until Officer Daniels is out of earshot before continuing.

PATRICK
You could've let me know you were in town.

JENNIFER
I wasn't exactly here for a social visit.

PATRICK
Why are you here?

Jennifer's taken aback by Patrick's brusqueness.

JENNIFER
Did I miss something?

Patrick hands Jennifer the evidence-bagged picture.

PATRICK
Where did you get this? How did you know about Dr. Michaels?
(more importantly)
Why are you here?

JENNIFER
Why are you treating me like I'm a suspect? You actually think I had something to do with this?

PATRICK
Just answer the questions.

JENNIFER
Are you serious?

From Patrick's no-nonsense demeanor, he is.

JENNIFER
Wow. My dad told me about Dr. Michaels, and I came here to ask him about my past. Oh, and by the way, go fuck yourself.

Patrick stops Jennifer before she's able to enter her vehicle.

PATRICK
I'm sorry, okay. There was a murder a couple days ago. That victim's head was also crushed.

JENNIFER
Guess you think I had something to do with that too?

PATRICK
(sincere)
No. I don't.

Jennifer softens.

JENNIFER
Was it someone you knew?

PATRICK
Rachel.

JENNIFER
Rachel? Your daughter Rachel?
(off his silence)
I'm so sorry, Pat.

Patrick eyes meet the picture Jennifer's holding.

PATRICK
Where did you get that?

JENNIFER
Melissa. That's what Dr. Michaels called her. Apparently, my psycho personality has a name. She left it for me a couple of nights ago.
(beat)
Did you know about the procedure he performed on me?

Patrick's silence is more than enough for Jennifer.

JENNIFER
Why didn't you tell me?

PATRICK
I saw how you were before the procedure. You wouldn’t sleep or eat. They told me how you kept waking up in the middle of the night, screaming. Then, one day, you were happy. Smiling. Laughing. Oblivious of anything that happened. Everything about John, Anna and that night vanished.

JENNIFER
What happened that night? What made him snap?

PATRICK
I’d give anything to know. Maybe I could’ve done something. You were too traumatized to provide anything useful.
(beat)
Are you set up anywhere?

JENNIFER
Millhaven Inn.

PATRICK
We’ll meet up later. Talk a little more about it.

JENNIFER
Thanks.

PATRICK
Rachel’s funeral’s tomorrow, if you’re interested in coming. I’m sure Claire would love to see you.

Patrick gives her a light hug, mindful of her sore ribs. He helps her into her car, closing its door.

Ashley leaves the office. Watches Jennifer’s Prius pulling off, confused.

ASHLEY
What happened? What she say?

PATRICK
She didn’t know anything.

ASHLEY
She’s not just going to come out and say, “I murdered your daughter with my daddy’s sledgehammer.” Especially not to you. Let me talk to her.

PATRICK
Ash, she didn't know anything. Let it go.

ASHLEY
C'mon, chief. Just let me bring her in --

PATRICK
(interrupting)
-- Let it go.

It came off a little more forcibly than Patrick expected. His elevated voice gets the attention of the local media.

Ashley stares, stung by his brusque tone. Patrick softens seeing Ashley's reaction.

PATRICK
Go home, Ash. Get some rest.

As Patrick motions for his 4x4 --

ASHLEY
We took an oath to protect the people of this town.

Patrick stops, faces her.

PATRICK
That's what I'm trying to do, Ash.

ASHLEY
How can you protect anyone if you're compromised by personal loyalties? What you're doing isn't fair to that doctor, and it's not fair to Rachel. And it's a betrayal to that badge you're wearing.

Ashley can't stand the sight of him. She turns and leaves.

Patrick tries his best to ignore the curious stares and random looks from the surrounding news hounds and lookie loos.

INT. MILLHAVEN CEMETERY - DAY

A large group of friends and family. Patrick, Ashley and Claire are the only familiar faces.

Ashley's positioned between Patrick and Claire, who keep their distance.

A PRIEST stands at the head of the coffin. Delivers the last rites.

Patrick's attention drifts from the casket to --

JENNIFER

Approaching from the distance. All black pantsuit. Flats. Sunglasses.

Patrick warms seeing her. Ashley follows Patrick's gaze to Jennifer. Can't believe that she's actually here.

Claire notices Patrick watching Jennifer. Doesn't like how he's looking at her.

INT. MILLHAVEN CEMETERY - LATER

Post-service. ATTENDEES hug Claire for comfort, then walk off. Ashley stands alongside Claire for support.

Ashley scolds Jennifer with an icy stare as she approaches.

Even after Jennifer removes her glasses, it doesn't do much to help Claire with recognition, until --

ASHLEY
(with contempt)
Julia.

CLAIRE
Julia?

Now, Claire sees it. She steps back giving Jennifer a once over.

CLAIRE
Oh my God. Look at you. If Anna could see you now.

Claire gestures for a hug. Jennifer stops her.

JENNIFER
I'm a little sore.

Claire notices the cast peeking from beneath Jennifer's jacket sleeve.

CLAIRE
(genuine concern)
You okay?

JENNIFER
I’m fine as long as I don’t overextend myself.

CLAIRE
How long are you in town?

Ashley’s just as interested in Jennifer’s answer as Claire.

JENNIFER
I’m not really sure. Couple days, maybe.

CLAIRE
We have to get together before you leave...

Claire pauses spotting Patrick talking with the Priest in the distance. It’s hard for Jennifer not to notice.

Claire stays mindful of Patrick as she continues:

CLAIRE
...Will you be attending the reception?

JENNIFER
Sorry. I have some stuff I gotta take care of.

CLAIRE
No problem. It was really nice seeing you.

Claire instinctively motions to hug, until Jennifer politely stops her.

She smiles, sheepishly, remembering. Waves instead. Making herself scarce before Patrick sees her.

Ashley confronts Jennifer. She speaks to Jennifer confidentially.

ASHLEY
I know who you are, and if I find out you had anything to do with my best friend’s murder --

JENNIFER
-- I’m sorry about what happened to Rachel, I really am, but I had nothing to do with that. I wasn’t even here when it happened.

ASHLEY
Uh-huh.

Ashley moves closer. Her hard stare is meant to intimidate.

Jennifer doesn’t back down an inch. She stands her ground defiantly.

JENNIFER
It’s gonna take a helluva lot more than you staring to rattle me.

Patrick runs over to separate them. Talks with force calm.

PATRICK
(to Ashley)
Walk it off.

Ashley cuts Jennifer a dangerous look, before she walks off.

INT. MAMA JEAN’S DINER - LATER

There’s a steady flow of customers. WAITRESSES stay busy. BUSBOYS clear tables.

Jennifer and Patrick share a window booth. A steaming mug before them.

JENNIFER
That was fun. Thanks for inviting to the funeral.

PATRICK
I apologize for Ashley. She’s been going through a lot lately.

JENNIFER
How’s things with you and Claire?

Patrick hesitates before taking a sip from his mug, realizing she knows something. Doesn’t make it any easier to talk about.

PATRICK
It’s just best, for the both of us, that we keep our distance.

JENNIFER
In other words, there’s still love there.

PATRICK
That's not it.

JENNIFER
Of course it isn't. That's why she still wears her wedding ring and you're still single.

PATRICK
It's... complicated.

JENNIFER
It really isn't.

PATRICK
Jennifer... please.

Jennifer politely backs off.

JENNIFER
What were my parents like before everything turned to shit?

Patrick forms a smile as if seeing an image of them in his head.

PATRICK
They were great people. Salt of the earth. Everyone at the station loved John; great work ethic. Anna was beautiful; quite possibly the most beautiful woman in town. You -- you were Anna's life force. There wasn't anything in this world she wouldn't have done for you.

JENNIFER
She sounds nice. I wish I could remember her.

Jennifer's suddenly distracted by the commotion outside the window --

-- a WOMAN uses all her strength to restrain the leashed GERMAN SHEPARD from the MAN standing near her.

He offers her a phone as he gestures to the ground in the distance.

She reaches to take the phone while restraining her dog. Thanks him.

JENNIFER
Always wondered what happened to Cujo.

PATRICK
That’s Thor. You would’ve liked him six months ago.

JENNIFER
What happened six months ago?

PATRICK
Nancy’s husband was still alive. He died of a heart attack. It hit him as he was driving home from work. It’s been really hard on both of them, Thor especially. He’s been real overprotective of Nancy lately. Who could blame him? They’re all each other have.

Jennifer turns away from the window. Can’t shake the thought in her head. As if realizing something she hadn’t before.

JENNIFER
Mason... Brooke... Dr. Michaels...
(off Patrick’s confusion)
Dr. Michaels said Melissa only harmed people who she felt threaten me.

PATRICK
Why Rachel? You adored her.

Jennifer removes some cash from her purse. Places it on the table.

PATRICK
Whoa. Where you going?

JENNIFER
Something doesn’t fit.

Jennifer leaves from the booth in a hurry. Patrick goes after her.

PATRICK
You’re going to that house. Not after everything that happened.

JENNIFER
We both know you’re not gonna stop me.

PATRICK
I’ll arrest you.

Jennifer stops at the door and looks back at him.

Patrick comes across serious enough, but his eyes calls him on his bluff.

JENNIFER
Yeah right.

Patrick helplessly watches Jennifer go.

INT. MILLHAVEN INN, JENNIFER’S ROOM - LATER

Jennifer crosses to the bed from the bathroom. Out of the pantsuit and into something more practical: tee-shirt and jeans.

Slides into a leather jacket concealing the snub-nose revolver tucked at the swell of her back.

She hits the light switch as she leaves the room.

EXT. STREET INTERSECTION - NIGHT

Patrick’s 4x4 waits at a red light. His eyes drift from the road ahead to the service station across the street. “Bill’s Self-Serve” is easily readable from the lit sign.

Patrick pauses recognizing Claire’s Buick parked at a gas pump, then Claire leaving from the building carrying a five gallon gas can.

EXT. BILL’S SELF-SERVE - MOMENTS LATER

Claire’s at one of the pumps filling the can. She scoffs seeing Patrick approaching.

CLAIRE
Isn’t stalking a felony, Sheriff?

PATRICK
What are you doing, Claire?

CLAIRE
Kinda self-explanatory, Pat.

The pump stops. Claire replaces the nozzle. Fastens the cap on the can.

She struggles to place the can into the opened trunk of her car. Patrick helps.

CLAIRE
Obliged.

Claire closes the trunk. Urgently heads for the driver’s door.

Patrick follows. Claire doesn’t break stride.

PATRICK
Whatever you’re thinking about doing, don’t. You’ll regret it, I promise you.

Claire stops only for a second. There’s a hint of sorrow in Claire’s eyes, as she says:

CLAIRE
It’s too late for regrets.

She enters her vehicle, reaches to close the door. Patrick holds it open.

PATRICK
It was easier than loving you.

CLAIRE
What...?

PATRICK
I wanted to keep my distance from you. I couldn’t be around you. I wanted you to hate me. It was easier than still loving you.

Tears swell in Claire’s eyes, the pain is deep.

Claire abruptly snatches the door from Pat’s grasp, can’t deal with this right now.

Drives off. Leaving Patrick to watch her shrinking taillights.

EXT. ABANDONED HOUSE - NIGHT

Only the haunting silhouette of the house can be seen, until lightning scorches the sky briefly revealing the ominous structure, and Jennifer’s Prius parked in the driveway.

INT. ABANDONED HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Jennifer enters from the FOYER. The stream from her flashlight glides over the covered, long forgotten furnishings.

She walks further into the room, stops hearing a -- CRUNCH!

Jennifer concentrates the beam of light on her shoe as she lifts it to reveal a cracked glass shard.

She kneels at the shard, focusing the light on the glass around the area of a broken picture frame.

INT. ABANDONED HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Rachel stops at the only FRAMED PICTURE on the fireplace mantle. Settled dust obscures the image.

Rachel clears the dust. Examines the yet unseen photograph.

The CREAKING FLOOR from above startles Rachel. The PICTURE FRAME slips from her grasp.

Time stretches to a crawl as the framed picture descends to the floor.

As the picture makes its descent, the photograph from beyond the glass becomes visible: John, Anna and Julia huddled around a snowman.

Until, the glass protecting the picture SHATTERS on impact against the floor.

The BROKEN GLASS once again obscures the picture.

INT. ABANDONED HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT (PRESENT)

Jennifer is still knelt at the broken frame. Removes the identical picture from her jacket pocket, places it within the frame -- perfect fit!

FOOTSTEPS from above. Dust descends from the ceiling as someone moves around.

Jennifer straightens hearing a CHILD’S GIGGLE. Turns to the flashlight in the direction of --

-- Julia being playfully chased by John. They EVAPORATE as he chases her up the stairs.

Jennifer lowers her flashlight, unsure what she just saw.

She takes a moment to get her thoughts together, then cautiously approaches the stairs.

UPSTAIRS

Jennifer stops at the threshold of the MASTER BEDROOM. As she stares into the vacant room --

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

The door CREAKS open. Anna's in bed. A shadow looms over her sleeping face.

Anna's eyes snap open. They widen in horror seeing --

-- Julia with a sledgehammer in hand, elevated over head.

Before Anna is able to scream, Julia bears down with the hammer.

THEN -

Anna snaps up from bed, SCREAMING. Searches the room frantically.

Relaxes finding the room empty.

INT. JULIA'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Anna opens the door partially. Pokes in her head. Julia's fast asleep in bed.

Anna smiles, relieved. As she recedes from the door --

JULIA (OS)

Mommy?

Anna opens the door fully.

ANNA

Yes, baby?

Julia sits up in bed, watches Anna curiously.

JULIA

You okay?

ANNA
(softly)
Yes. Everything's fine, baby. Go back to sleep.

Julia eases back onto the mattress. Anna's there to tuck her in. Stops. Notices something on Julia's arm.

Has to turn on the light to get a better look. A BRUISE on her biceps. Another on her wrist.

Anna goes into mother mode. Inspects the bruising.

ANNA
How did this happen?

Julia shrugs.

ANNA
Did someone do this to you?

Julia can only stare. Tears rim her eyes.

ANNA
I can't help you unless you talk to me. Who did this?

Julia hesitates, not sure if she should tell.

ANNA
Please... talk to me.

JULIA
I promise never to tell.

ANNA
Who told you not to tell?

JULIA
You promise you won't get mad?

ANNA
I promise.

Julia takes a moment to build up the nerve.

JULIA
Daddy.

Anna instinctively SLAPS her.

ANNA
Your father loves you.

Julia holds her face. Lies back onto the bed. Cries. Regretting ever confiding in her.

ANNA
He's a good man. He would never hurt you.

Anna switches off the light. SLAMS the door as she storms out.

HALL OUTSIDE OF THE ROOM -

Anna presses her back against the door. Emotionally distraught. Her mind races.

INT. WATTS RESIDENCE, MASTER BEDROOM - DAY (FLASHBACK)

Anna straightens the bed. Tucks the sheet under mattress. Pauses feeling something.

Anna pulls out a pair of girls underpants. Her hearts drop.

INT. WATTS RESIDENCE, LIVING ROOM - LATER

Anna's on the sofa crying uncontrollably. Doesn't see Claire entering with a new born wrapped in a pink blanket, and a diaper bag.

CLAIRE
(sarcastic)
I see John's making good use of that sledgehammer Pat got him.

Hearing Claire, Anna immediately clears her eyes and straightens her clothing trying desperately to put on a natural air.

Claire joins Anna on the sofa. Notices she's been crying.

CLAIRE
Do you want to talk about it?

ANNA
I was watching the soaps earlier. I couldn't believe Bryce left Celeste again.

Claire politely pretends not to know Anna's lying. Anna shifts her focus to the baby.

ANNA
Aww, let me see my godchild.

Claire carefully places Rachel into Anna’s arms. As Anna rocks and plays with Rachel --

CLAIRE
Where’s Julia? I didn’t see her outside.

ANNA
Upstairs having her nap. Something wrong?

CLAIRE
Okay. You didn’t hear this from me. I overheard John talking to Pat about this camping trip he had planned for Julia this weekend. It’s supposed to be a surprise, so act surprised.

Claire pauses, noticing Anna’s reaction to the news.

CLAIRE
Are you sure everything’s alright?

ANNA
Why wouldn’t it be?

Anna reacts to a foul stench. Gives Rachel a whiff. Indeed the odor’s coming from her.

ANNA
Whoa. Seems like someone just made a deposit.

CLAIRE
Want me?

Anna playfully slaps Claire’s hands away.

ANNA
Relax. This is my speciality.

Claire backs off as Anna places Rachel on the sofa. Begins cleaning her.

ANNA
How’s Pat adjusting to fatherhood?

CLAIRE
He’s been great. Doesn’t mind getting up in the middle of the night, or making bottles. Rachel just adores him.

Anna hands Claire the soiled diaper. Claire reaches into the diaper bag for a fresh diaper.

CLAIRE
I'm really impress with how naturally he's adapting to all of this.

Claire offers Anna the diaper. Anna doesn't accept it right away.

She regards Rachel for a moment, then takes the diaper.

CLAIRE
Everything's okay?

ANNA
(finishing up)
Yeah. I can't get over how much she resembles Julia when she was a baby.

Claire immediately reacts to that statement. She looks away, shamefully.

Anna lifts Rachel into her arms, instantly notices something wrong with Claire.

ANNA
You okay?

Claire carefully takes Rachel from Anna, avoiding eye contact.

CLAIRE
I have to go. I have a lot of errands to run.

Anna helps Claire gather her stuff, a bit confused by Claire's sudden change in behavior.

ANNA
O... kay.

She escorts Claire and the baby to the door.

ANNA
Call me later?

CLAIRE
(quickly)
Yeah.

Claire leaves in a rush.

A feeling slowly creeps over Anna as she watches Claire from the door. Not a good feeling.

Claire smiles nervously at Anna as she enters her Buick and drives away.

Anna closes the door, wrestling with a thought. Can't shake it.

INT. CLAIRE'S BUICK - NIGHT (PRESENT)

The vehicles' headlights frames the back of the Abandoned house.

Claire focuses on the wedding band around her ring finger. So many years of memories, and emotions, associated with it.

After a moment, she pulls it from her finger and tosses it out the window.

Clears the tears from her eyes. Leaves the car.

INT. WATTS RESIDENCE, MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

John, in uniform, removes his police belt. Places the holstered revolver on the night stand.

Yawns as he unbuttons and untucks his shirt. Long day. Gets comfortable in bed.

Reaches for the lamp. Flips off the light. Closes his eyes.

The HANDS and KNEES of a PERSON moves quietly over John's relaxing body.

JOHN

Closed lids open. A bit startled to find Julia staring back at him.

John sits up enough to see Julia sitting on top of him suggestively. White pajamas. Bare feet.

Her hands are hidden by the natural darkness of the room.

JOHN
What are you doing?

JULIA
(teasing)
Shhh.

Julia places her hand to his chest. John allows her to ease him back into bed.

As John falls back, he glances at the night stand. Notices his firearm’s missing from its holster.

John quickly turns to Julia. He’s now looking down the barrel of his own gun.

JOHN
Baby... what are you doing?

JULIA
(dangerous)
Don’t call me that.

John couldn’t see it before, but does now, Julia’s appearance has changed drastically.

Her adorableness has melted into something more demonized: her black eyes and black veins along her skin make her appearance all the more surreal.

A lecherous smile forms on her discolored lips. “MELISSA” has taken over.

John tries to put on a natural air, but there’s no hiding the fear in his eyes.

JOHN
You’re right. I’m sorry --

JULIA/MELISSA
-- No more talking.

John quickly GRABS the revolver before Melissa can pull the trigger.

Disrupts her aim. The SHOT goes wild. Punctures a hole in the pillow inches from John’s skull.

John snatches the gun as he shoves Melissa away. Flips on the light.

Melissa, infuriated, reaches for John. Her face contorts into a frighting DEMONIC VISAGE.

The business end of John’s revolver makes her reconsider.

Melissa’s DEMON FACE FADES. Returns to the innocent face of Julia.

JOHN
(haunted)
What the hell are you?

MELISSA
(teasing)
Whatever you want me to be.

ANNA (O.S.)
Have you completely lost your fucking mind?!

John’s eyes leaves Julia and finds Anna watching from the doorway. Confused. Doesn’t know what she walked in on.

John defiantly holds his bead.

JOHN
That isn’t our daughter.

ANNA
What the fuck are you talking about? Listen to yourself.

JOHN
There’s something wrong with her, Anna. That is <u>not</u> Julia!

ANNA
John, give me the gun, please. Don’t do this.

John looks to his wife, then to Melissa. Back to his wife.

JOHN
You don’t know what you’re doing.

ANNA
Yes I do. Trust me.

John’s resistance crumbles. After a moment, he lowers the gun and willingly hands it to Anna.

John turns back as “Melissa” slides from the bed.

JOHN
Anna, she’s trying to get away. You’ve got to stop her!

CLICK! -- John’s eyes follow the sound to Anna training his revolver in his direction.

He watches “Melissa” smile, mockingly, as she retreats from the room.

John returns his focus on Anna.

JOHN
What are you doing?

ANNA
I’m going to ask you a couple of questions. Your answers to those questions will determine how this ends.
(beat)
Is Rachel yours?

John can’t bring himself to look at her, hangs his head. Instantly remorseful.

BAM! -- the shot went wild. Off to the wall near John’s head.

John nearly pisses himself.

JOHN
Jesus Christ, Anna!

ANNA
(serious)
Is Rachel yours?

JOHN
(hesitantly)
Yes.

Anna lowers the gun slightly as her emotions get the better of her.

John takes a step forward, while Anna still has the gun lower away from him.

ANNA
Why did it have to be Claire?

John moves closer.

JOHN
It was a mistake. Claire and Pat had this argument. She came to me for comfort --

ANNA
-- So you impregnate her?

JOHN
It was a mistake --

It doesn't look as if Anna realizes how close John's getting, until -- BAM! -- closer to him than the last.

ANNA
(dangerous)
Don't.

John raises his hands as he takes a couple steps back, distancing himself.

ANNA
I wanted to believe you were the man I married. I don't know who you are anymore.

JOHN
I'm sorry about Claire. It was a mistake. I'll do whatever it takes to win back your trust. Just, please, put the gun down.

Anna cocks back on the hammer --

ANNA
You can never have my trust again.

JOHN
Okay -- I'll leave. I'll give you a divorce. I'll stay away, I swear to God, just don't do this. It's not worth it.

ANNA
I'm not gonna kill you over Claire, I'm gonna kill you because of this.

Anna pulls something from her pocket, and tosses it at John.

He catches it, instinctively. His eyes fall on Julia's underwear, speechless.

John looks up at Anna with guilt-ridden eyes. His fate sealed.

JOHN
Could I at least tell Julia good --

Anna FIRES before he can mouth the word “bye.”

BAM! BAM!

John’s struck in the chest. Once. Twice. His body drops.

Anna lowers the gun as she stares at John’s lifeless body, numb.

She nearly jumps out of her skin hearing --

MELISSA (O.S.)
Mommy?

Anna turns to find “Julia” watching from the door. She stares at her daughter with emotional eyes.

ANNA
He won’t ever hurt you again.

MELISSA
He shouldn’t have hurt me to begin with.

Anna’s taken aback, stung by the statement.

ANNA
I’m sorry. I didn’t know --

MELISSA
-- I told you, and what did you do? You slapped me.

ANNA
(breaking down)
I’m so sorry.

MELISSA
You should’ve been there to protect me. You failed me. You failed me!

ANNA
I’m sorry, baby. I’m so sorry.

Anna reaches out for Julia, but she turns her back on her.

Anna stares at Julia’s back -- her face riddled with guilt and regret. She presses the barrel to her temple and...

BAM! -- Anna’s head SNAPS unnaturally. Her body crumbles to the floor in a heap.

The GUNSHOT is like harsh slap to JULIA. She turns, looking back into the room. Confused. Unaware of anything that has happened.

Until she sees Anna lying on the floor. Blood haloing her head.

Julia crumbles to the floor. She SCREAMS, reaching out for her.

INT. ABANDONED HOUSE, CHILD'S BEDROOM - NIGHT (PRESENT)

Jennifer is knelt on the floor in the same position as Julia.

Crying profusely, Jennifer has her arm outstretched reaching.

She abruptly lowers her arm, closing her hand, realizing there's nothing there.

Jennifer clears her eyes distracted by the light filtering in through the slats of the boarded windows.

She gathers herself from the floor. Investigates the source of the strange light.

Jennifer peeks between the boarded slats, oblivious of the closet door opening in the distance, and MELISSA emerging from it.

EXT. ABANDONED HOUSE - NIGHT

Claire's Buick is parked haphazardly in the backyard.

It's headlights frame Claire as she walks the perimeter of the house with the gas can. It's contents pour out freely.

She rounds the corner. Stops seeing Jennifer's parked Prius.

INT. ABANDONED HOUSE, CHILD'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jennifer continues staring out. Claire's Buick is visible through the wooden slats.

She nearly has a heart attack hearing a haunting VOICE from behind --

MELISSA (O.S.)
Hello, Julia... or is Jennifer? Which do you prefer?

Jennifer turns. Melissa’s no more than ten feet away. Her body’s partially hidden in a patch of natural darkness.

JENNIFER
(haunted)
Melissa.

MELISSA
Of all the names, that’s my least favorite.

Jennifer eyes the sledgehammer in Melissa’s hand. Its metal head caked with the dried blood of its victims.

Jennifer instinctively removes the revolver, and levels it on her.

MELISSA
(reassuringly)
I’m not going to hurt you.

Jennifer defiantly holds a steady bead.

JENNIFER
You made my mother kill herself.

MELISSA
She didn’t protect you. She failed you.

JENNIFER
She loved me.

Jennifer’s finger inches back on the trigger. FIRES a shot. Melissa’s head snaps back, then slumps forward.

When she lifts her head, the BULLET WOUND at the center of it is HEALED.

MELISSA
Now, that wasn’t very nice.

Melissa’s eyes meet the revolver. It’s abruptly snatched from Jennifer’s grasp and tossed into the darkness.

There’s a sound of the revolver hitting the floor.

JENNIFER
You’re not a personality. What are you?

MELISSA
You remember, don't you? Being alone. Being ostracized at school. Molested at home. You prayed for someone to understand... for someone to protect you. For someone to listen. A friend.

JENNIFER
That was to God. I prayed to God.

MELISSA
God isn't the only being that listens to prayers.

JENNIFER
Who are you? The devil?

MELISSA
Let's just say I'm looking out for your best interest.

JENNIFER
You left me that picture.

MELISSA
I needed your memories. I needed you to remember how to hate.

JENNIFER
I never wanted this.

MELISSA
I wouldn't be here if you didn't.

JENNIFER
I'm not like you. I'm not a killer!

Melissa smiles knowingly.

MELISSA
Give it some time.

JENNIFER
What happens to me when you're finished? You'll just kill me like everyone else?

MELISSA
I told you, "I'm not gonna hurt you."

JENNIFER
(thinks)
You need me.

MELISSA
I'd be lying if I said I didn't, and I can't lie to you, Jennifer. That's not what friends do. I have plans for you...
(evil)
...and that body.

CLAIRE (O.S.)
Julia?

Jennifer sees Claire entering from the corridor. Looks back to where Melissa stood.

She's now gone.

Jennifer searches frantically for Melissa.

CLAIRE
What the hell's going on? What are you doing here?

JENNIFER
Trust me, it's better you didn't know.

Jennifer grabs Claire's arm, and leads her to the entrance.

Their progress is halted by Melissa emerging from behind the door.

MELISSA
You weren't gonna leave without saying goodbye?

Melissa shoves the door shut.

EXT. ABANDONED HOUSE - SAME

A Millhaven police cruiser pulls to a stop near the dilapidated fence.

Ashley leaves from the vehicle. Recognizes Jennifer's Prius parked in the driveway.

Walks over to investigate. Stops seeing a light from the side of the house. Heads in that direction.

Ashley pauses finding the gas can, then looks over to Claire's haphazardly parked Buick.

Ashley hears something in the distance. Another vehicle?

She looks over shoulder to find Patrick’s 4x4 pulling in behind her cruiser.

INT. ABANDONED HOUSE, CHILD’S BEDROOM - SAME

Jennifer and Claire backpedal from Melissa as she methodically advances, dragging the sledgehammer.

CLAIRE
Who the fuck is this bitch?

MELISSA
The last thing you’re ever gonna fuckin’ see.

Claire backs away. Collides into Jennifer.

Jennifer loses her footing. Pulls Claire with her, as she falls.

Melissa stands before Claire. Effortlessly lifts the sledgehammer.

Claire shields herself from what’s to come.

JENNIFER
Melissa. Stop!

Melissa FREEZES involuntarily. Looks to Jennifer taken aback.

Jennifer’s just as surprised as Melissa is.

MELISSA
What’re you doing?

JENNIFER
(softly)
I wish I knew.

Jennifer helps Claire to her feet as Melissa struggles to break free from her stasis.

CLAIRE
What just happened?

JENNIFER
It doesn’t matter. Just go.

CLAIRE
You expect me to leave you alone with Chucky’s little sister?

JENNIFER
Claire... please.

Claire, confused, starts for the door. Stops seeing Jennifer’s revolver lying on the floor.

MELISSA
You can’t let her go. You’ve seen her betrayal.

Melissa’s statement gets Claire’s attention. She looks to Jennifer, quizzically.

EXT. ABANDONED HOUSE - SAME

Ashley meets Patrick half-way as he exits. He immediately spots Jennifer’s Prius.

PATRICK
What are you doing here? What’s she doing here?

ASHLEY
I followed Julia after she left you at Mama Jean’s.

PATRICK
Wait. You what?

ASHLEY
Bad, Ashley, I know. I promise to stand in the corner later. What’re you doing here?

PATRICK
Don’t you know that feeling you get when you know something bad’s gonna happen?

ASHLEY
Funny you should say that.

Patrick follows Ashley.

INT. ABANDONED HOUSE, BEDROOM - SAME

Claire approaches Jennifer desperately in need of answers.

CLAIRE
You knew about Rachel? There’s no way you could’ve known.

JENNIFER
John told her everything. You didn’t see the pain you cause my mother. You was supposed to be her best friend.

CLAIRE
I never meant to hurt anybody. What happened between John and I wasn’t planned; it never should’ve happened. But, I’m glad it did because it gave me Rachel.

MELISSA
(to Jennifer)
Is it okay to kill her now?

JENNIFER
No. No more killing. You’re not going to define who I am.

Then, Jennifer hears it... that VOICE. Dangerous... monstrous... the one from her dream.

It’s coming from Melissa as she struggles to break free.

MELISSA
You’re so weak. I knew you wouldn’t have the stomach to follow through.

Claire pauses finally noticing the resemblance between Melissa and Jennifer.

JENNIFER
I didn’t start this, you did.

CLAIRE
And I’m going to finish it.

Jennifer notices Claire has the snub-nose aimed, not at Melissa, but on her!

Claire smiles at Melissa’s reaction.

JENNIFER
Claire? What are you doing?

CLAIRE
To kill the monster, you cut off its head.

Jennifer raises her hands. Tries to reason with her.

JENNIFER
Claire, I can stop her, but if you do this, if you kill me, no one will be able to stop her, and she'll win.

Claire hesitates. Has second thoughts.

CLAIRE
I want to believe you, Julia...

Then, Claire's eyes meets Melissa. Her remorse melts into rage.

CLAIRE
...but she killed my baby. I'm sorry. Nothing personal.

Claire's finger inches back on the trigger.

Jennifer reacts. Charges Claire. Seizes her arm.

Wild gunfire POCK the far wall.

Jennifer overpowers Claire. Knocks away the revolver.

The SNUB-NOSE slides across the floor stopping near the far wall.

The two women struggle for position.

Neither are aware that Melissa has started to move -- whatever imprisoned her has begun to wane.

EXT. ABANDONED HOUSE - SAME

Ashley leads Patrick to the gas can, then gestures to Claire's abandoned vehicle.

They react to the GUNSHOTS.

PATRICK
Call for back-up!

Ashley speaks urgently into her portable as Patrick races into the house.

INT. ABANDONED HOUSE, MASTER BEDROOM - SAME

Claire buries a fist into Jennifer's side. She screams in pain, immediately doubles over.

Claire scrambles across the floor, making a desperate lunge for the SNUB-NOSE...

...But a pair of BLACK-VEINED COVERED FEET blocks her path.

Claire's eyes meet the face of Melissa. Both hands gripping the sledgehammer over head, white-knuckle tight.

Melissa bears down with the sledgehammer with all her might.

Jennifer's on one knee, hurting. Trying to ride out the pain. She barely has enough strength to muster:

JENNIFER
Melissa... stop!

Jennifer's voice freezes Melissa. Mid-motion. Giving Claire the opportunity to make that final stretch between Melissa's legs.

Claire snatches the revolver from the floor. Spins it in Jennifer's direction.

Jennifer laboriously stands. Her hand clutching her side.

Melissa can only watch as the BULLET from the revolver strikes Jennifer.

Melissa SCREAMS as she helplessly watches Jennifer's body disappear through the bordered window.

The SLEDGEHAMMER slips from Melissa's grasp and falls inches from Claire's head.

Claire looks around for Melissa. She's nowhere to be found.

Claire leaves the floor, and crosses to the window. The headlights of Claire's Buick frames Jennifer's motionless body lying on the lawn.

Claire forms a triumphant smile. Patrick enters leading with his GLOCK.

He regards Claire looking out from the broken-out window holding the SNUB-NOSE tightly. The sledgehammer lying absently on the floor.

Patrick moves quickly to the window. Peers out at Jennifer.

PATRICK
Dear God. What did you do?

Claire smiles.

CLAIRE
You'll thank me later.

Patrick backs away from Claire, creating distance. He can't believe what he's about to do.

After a moment, he levels his Glock on Claire.

PATRICK
Drop the weapon, Claire.

Claire doesn't resist. She calmly places the snub-nose on the floor. Kicks it towards Patrick.

Raises her hands, surrendering.

EXT. ABANDONED HOUSE - LATER

Patrick and Ashley watch Claire in the backseat of a police cruiser from the porch.

ASHLEY
What happened in there, chief? Could you at least try to explain it to me?

PATRICK
I wouldn't know where to begin.

Patrick heads for the back.

EXT. ABANDONED HOUSE, BACK AREA - MOMENTS LATER

PARAMEDICS tend to Jennifer's motionless body.

Patrick kneels. It's hard to assess the severity of the damage. Doesn't look good.

PATRICK
Is she gonna make it?

PARAMEDIC
I'ma need you to stand back.
(to his partner)
We better move her.

Patrick hangs back allowing the Paramedics to do their job.

JENNIFER

Blood consumes the majority of her face. Her eyes closed. There’s no movement from her.

Suddenly, the environment changes. The Blood covering her face, slowly FADES.

Water surrounds her on all sides. The surroundings may seem familiar because Jennifer’s back --

UNDERWATER

Same as before. Imprisoned within the solidified surface. Utter fear flushes Jennifer’s face as she stares out at --

-- MELISSA. What Jennifer had been seeing all along.

Melissa stands there for a moment regarding Jennifer and her imprisonment. Flashes a toxic smile.

Jennifer BANGS her fist against the solidified wall, desperately trying to get out. But, the surface doesn’t yield.

Jennifer belts a MUFFLED SCREAM. Though dramatic, doesn’t do her much good.

INT. MILLHAVEN GENERAL, PATIENT’S ROOM - DAY

Jennifer’s MUFFLED SCREAMS trails off until only the sound is of the rhythmic beeping from the ELECTROCARDIOGRAM.

Jennifer lies soundly in a comatose sleep. A white sheet keeps her body warm. Bandaging conceals the wound on her head. An oxygen mask feeds her O2.

OUTSIDE OF THE ROOM

Patrick speaks with a DOCTOR. From Patrick’s grim expression, the prognoses doesn’t look good.

INT. JENNIFER’S ROOM - LATER

Patrick’s at bedside in silent vigil. Regards Jennifer lying in bed, peacefully.

PATRICK
If you can hear in there... I need you to pull through. You’re all I have left.

No reaction from Jennifer. Patrick tenderly brush strains of hair away from her face.

Quietly leaves the room.

JENNIFER

Closed lids abruptly snap open revealing a pair of black, pupil-less eyes.

NURSE’S STATION

Two GOSSIPING NURSES have their conversation interrupted by EMERGENCY BEEPING from one of the rooms.

They share a panicked look, then make a mad dash for --

JENNIFER’S ROOM

-- where they stop in the door’s threshold, staring quizzically at the empty bed.

INT. MILLHAVEN POLICE DEPARTMENT, PROPERTY ROOM - DAY

A door opens. The overhead light turns on illuminating the rows of metal shelves that fill this confined space.

Ashley enters carrying the snub-nose and the sledgehammer. Both bagged and tagged separately.

She locates a clear area on one of the shelves. Places both items on it. Walks away.

A pair of ADULT, BLACK-VEINED COVERED FEET moves methodically across the floor.

Ashley’s at the door. Motions to flip off the light.

A BLACK-VEIN COVERED HAND grabs the bagged sledgehammer.

Ashley pauses hearing something near one of the shelves. Walks back to investigate.

Stops at the shelf where she placed the sledgehammer and gun. The sledgehammer is missing.

She kneels to the floor. Retrieves the empty, discarded evidence bag.

Ashley searches around, baffled. Until she notices the trail of FOOTPRINTS leading away from the shelf.

Ashley reaches to touch them, but they EVAPORATE instantaneously.

INT. FEMALE DETENTION CENTER, INMATE’S CELL - NIGHT

Not much can be seen because of the darkness, except for a section of the cell where light shines in from the corridor.

Claire lies on a cot in an unflattering orange jumpsuit and slip-on shoes.

She hums a tune. Stops. Hears something in the distance.

It starts off faint, indistinguishable, then intensifies, becoming almost unbearable.

Claire sits up from the cot, listening.

HALL OUTSIDE OF CLAIRE’S CELL

BLACK-VEINED COVERED FEET move methodically along the linoleum floor.

The WEIGHED, METAL HEAD being dragged leave crude scaring along the floor in its wake.

CLAIRE’S CELL

Claire hesitantly leaves her cot. Cautiously approaches the cell’s door.

Stops upon seeing something beyond the cell door. Her eyes widen in horror.

CLAIRE
It can’t be. You’re dead. I shot you!
You’re dead!

What she sees -- “Jennifer” beyond the cell door. Bandaging conceals the wound on her head. Her cold, black eyes seems to devour Claire’s soul.

Like the rest of “Jennifer’s” body, her face is covered in black-veins.

An insidious smile curls her discolored lips.

The cell door UNLOCKS, then swings open allowing “Jennifer” entry.

Claire backs herself into a corner as “Jennifer” grips the handle of the sledgehammer; hoisting it effortlessly overhead.

Claire defensively shields herself from...

...the HEAD OF THE SLEDGEHAMMER lunging down on her at full speed!

The cell door SLAMS SHUT drowning Claire’s bloodcurdling SCREAM.

FADE OUT.